



Municipal Library,
NAINI TAL.



Class No. 923

Book No. A 312 V

QUEEN ALEXANDRA
THE WELL-BELOVED

LOVE STORIES OF ENGLISH QUEENS

BY
ELIZABETH VILLIERS

Large Crown 8vo. Cloth. 20 full-page illustrations.

7/6 net.

Daily Sketch.—"In breathing new life into these pale dead queens, Miss Villiers has converted ghosts into genuine creatures of flesh and blood. For young readers these will be almost fairy tales with a background of history; but the careful index, the well-chosen illustrations, give the book an interest for readers of maturer years as well."

The Queen.—"It makes the characters it deals with, living human beings."

The Lady.—"There is history here in a most attractive setting."

The Field.—"The twelve stories are delightfully told, and are quite suitable for young people, but will appeal to readers of all ages. The book is well illustrated with portraits, photographs and reproductions of old engravings."



HER MAJESTY QUEEN ALEXANDRA WHEN PRINCESS OF WALES

From a Painting

(Frontispiece)

The London Printing and Publishing Company

QUEEN ALEXANDRA THE WELL-BELOVED

By

ELIZABETH VILLIERS

Author of "Love Stories of English Queens," etc.

ILLUSTRATED

LONDON

STANLEY PAUL & CO., LTD.

8 ENDSLEIGH GARDENS, UPPER WOBURN PLACE

Durga Bah Municipal Library,	
Bajji Tal,	
दुर्गाबाह नगरपालिका लाइब्रेरी	
बाज्जी ताल	
Class No. (कक्षा नं.)	923
Book No. (पुस्तक नं.)	A 212 v
Received On. (प्राप्त भएको मिति)	Aug. '68

First published in 1925.

2567

*Made and Printed in Great Britain by
The Camelot Press Limited,
Southampton*

TO

MY DEAR FRIEND

MRS. LAURA FLORENCE SHUREY

O joy to the people and joy to the throne,
Come to us, love us and make us your own:
For, Saxon or Dane or Norman we,
Teuton or Celt or whatever we be,
We are each all Dane in our welcome of thee—
Alexandra!
—TENNYSON'S "Welcome," *March 7th*, 1863.

CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I.—THE GIRLHOOD OF THE PRINCESS	
The Yellow Palace—Prince Christian and Princess Louise—The bairn that was born on a Sabbath day—Tram up a child—Changed fortunes—Lady Wilde on Copenhagen—A family gathering—Girl friends—The small Princess and the young Prince of Wales .	15
CHAPTER II.—INFORMAL LOVE-STORY AND FORMAL BETROTHAL	
Possible brides for a future king—The Duchess of Cambridge lays plans—King Leopold, match-maker—Quite grown up—Her first photograph—The romance of a picture—A prince incognito—The “accidental” meeting—Love at first sight—Death of the Prince Consort—Edward the Peacemaker—The sisters of the Yellow Palace—Picnic holidays—The engagement ring	38
CHAPTER III.—BETROTHED	
“Gaiety” of Courts—Bismarck’s anger—Preparing the trousseau—Wedding gifts—The People’s Dowry—Leaving home—Our first ironclad—The bride-elect’s “smart” dress—The royal kiss—The noble engine-driver—At the Bricklayers’ Arms	58
CHAPTER IV.—THE ROYAL WEDDING DAY	
Queen Victoria as onlooker—The three processions—The wedding dress—The small boy who would not be kept in order—The gift of the bridesmaids—Signing the register—The honeymoon	72
CHAPTER V.—ROYAL HOMES	
Marlborough House—Its building by the great Duchess—De Foe’s account of it—How it came to the nation—The Prince’s bachelor home—The home of our present Prince of Wales—State apartments—The drawing-	

room—The garden—Sandringham—Heather and pines and lilies—The great hall—The dining- and drawing-rooms—The historic avenue—The gardens—The dairy—Buckingham Palace—The mulberry gardens—The Duke of Buckingham—The Queen's house—Strange visitors to the Palace—Windsor Castle—Balmoral—Osborne House . . .	79
--	----

CHAPTER VI.—YOUNG WIFE AND MOTHER

A reception at St. James's—The gloom of "drawing-rooms"—The first "drawing-room" the Princess held—When George IV. was King—Uncrowned King and Queen—A ball at Guildhall—Why Prince William changed his name—The tradition of the warming-pan—The Princess goes skating—The birth of the royal heir—Doctors and nurses who came too late—"It"—The christening of the Prince . . .	99
---	----

CHAPTER VII.—DAYS DARK AND SUNNY

That old battle of Heligoland—Unwelcome visitors—A Scottish holiday and the heir of an earl—Birth of the second son—Marriage of Princess Mary Adclaide—Darby and Joan—Marriage of Princess Helena—Alliances on the Continent—How Princess Dagmar became the Empress Marie—The birth of the Princess Louise—"The Alexandra Limp"—The doves of Irish peace—Birth of Princess Victoria—A Continental tour—The three most lovely women—A holiday in Egypt—Sightseeing at Cairo—Electric light at Karnak—The wonders of Constantinople—"Mr. and Mrs. Williams"—The graves in the Crimea—The visit to Greece—The birth of Princess Maud . . .	112
---	-----

CHAPTER VIII.—THE SHADOW OF SORROW

The death of the baby Prince—Illness of the	
---	--

CONTENTS

XI

PAGE

Prince of Wales—Prayers in the church— How the nation waited—Transfusion of blood —Thanksgivings	131
--	-----

CHAPTER IX.—MEETINGS AND PARTINGS

The family gathering at Serdensborg—The prince who played “ bears ” in the nursery—The pet of the party—Two little cousins—The marriage of a Russian Grand Duchess—The palace of ice—The Prince to go to India—A digression—The good-bye to Dean Stanley— The happy return—The imperial crown .	138
---	-----

CHAPTER X.—THE ROYAL CHILDREN

Prince Eddie's illness—Sailor Princes—The scare of the broad arrow—Prince George the Pickle —Our sailor Prince—Marriage of Princess Thyra—How the King of Hanover was Duke of Cumberland—The tragedy of Princess Alice —Their “ Royal Shynesses ”—The children who shared the schoolroom at Sandringham— Fair Princess May of Teck and beautiful Alice of Hesse—The Princess and her children at church—Why the missionary hymn was sung—Visitors at Sandringham—The organist who was frightened of Mr. Gladstone— Sunday afternoons—The Princess and her love for animals—The Prince as host—Three annual balls—The charm of the Princess .	149
--	-----

CHAPTER XI.—THE HAPPY MARRIAGE AND THE VACANT CHAIR

The love-story of the Princess Louise—The birth of Lady Alexandra Duff—A holiday at Livadia—The illness of Prince George—The joy of the Christmas betrothal—The Sudden sorrow—Death of Prince Eddie—The letter from Queen Victoria to the nation	173
---	-----

CHAPTER XII.—THE NATION REJOICES	
The Wooing of the Duke—The Love-story at Sheen Lodge—The wonderful wedding—Birth of Prince Charming—The christening of the Prince—Death of the Tsar and the marriage of his heir—Princess Maud and her sailor cousin—The rejoicings of the Jubilee—Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, Duchess of Teck, philanthropist—The accident at Waddesdon—The death of Queen Louise—Outbreak of war—The attempt on the lives of the Prince and Princess	186

CHAPTER XIII.—KING AND QUEEN	
The death of Queen Victoria—Opening Parliament—The Superstition of the Koh-i-noor—The Duke of York becomes Duke of Cornwall—The new Princess Royal—Preparations for the Coronation—The rule as to coronets and trains—The gipsy's warning—The bolt from the blue—The King's letter to his people—Crowned !	199

CHAPTER XIV.—CROWDED YEARS	
Lady Dorothy Nevill's memories—Peril of fire—The heroism of the Hon. Charlotte Knollys—Crowded years—Prince Charles becomes King Haakon—Visit from the King of Greece—The King of Spain's search for a British bride—Death of the King of Denmark—The Norwegian Coronation—The visit to Italy—King Edward's death—The nation's mourning—Sunset and evening-tide	213

CHAPTER XV.—THE QUEEN MOTHER	
The Queen Mother—Joys and sorrows—Dark days—Good deeds well done—Eventide—The passing of "Our Very Dear Lady."	224

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

HER MAJESTY WHEN PRINCESS OF WALES	<i>Frontispiece</i>
<i>From a painting</i>	
QUEEN ALEXANDRA 	32
<i>From a painting by the late Edward Hughes</i>	
THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER SISTER ..	64
THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER CHILDREN	96
HER MAJESTY'S FAVOURITE HOMES 	128
<i>Sandringham and Marlborough House</i>	
THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER FIRST GRANDSON 	160
KING EDWARD AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA ..	192
<i>In Coronation Robes</i>	
HER MAJESTY STARTING FOR A ROSE-DAY DRIVE	224

CHAPTER I

THE GIRLHOOD OF THE PRINCESS

The Yellow Palace—Prince Christian and Princess Louise—The bairn that was born on a Sabbath day—Train up a child—Changed fortunes—Lady Wilde on Copenhagen—A family gathering—Girl friends—The small Princess and the young Prince of Wales.

COPENHAGEN is one of the most picturesque cities in the world, and has been called the Venice of the north, so many streams and branches of its river and its bay break into the streets. "The Merchants' Haven" is the actual meaning of the word, and it deserves its name, for its quays and harbours are crowded with vessels of all kinds, and, though it does not boast many buildings of great architectural splendour, the facts that the large number of the houses are of wood, painted in many colours, and that flowers of all kinds flourish, give it a sense of gaiety and brightness that hardly any other city in the world possesses.

Now in that pleasant city there is a street named the Amaleigade, in which stands a good-sized house called the Yellow Palace, because of its colour. Yellow the walls are certainly,

but it is not a palace as we understand the word, being a great deal smaller and far less pretentious than many of the mansions to be found in London's West End.

Rather more than eighty years or so ago this Yellow Palace was being set in order and re-furnished because young Prince Christian of Glucksburg was to marry his cousin, the Princess Louise of Hesse, and would bring his bride to the house.

In those days it was the fashion to describe all royal weddings as romances, though generally they were nothing of the kind, so a great deal of ink had been used in describing the attraction of this young couple to each other. Probably they did feel deep affection, for they had been brought up together almost as brother and sister, and the marriage proved ideally happy; but from their cradles they had been taught they were to marry each other, and many political interests brought about the wedding.

It was the Tsar of Russia, Nicholas I., who actually engineered the alliance, and, considering all things, a great deal of credit is due to him for having made a really excellent arrangement.

In those days King Frederick VI. ruled over what we call Denmark to-day, but his kingdom included also the peninsular land, Schleswig and Holstein, which was afterwards taken from the Germans, and then partly restored to the

Danish Crown by the terms of peace made after the recent Great War. Though the two countries had one monarch, they had separate laws, and in Schleswig-Holstein the Salic law held sway, the law by which no woman can occupy a throne, though there was no objection to a queen ruling in her own right in Denmark.

Naturally King Frederick ruled the two without trouble, but his only son, Christian, the heir to the throne, was childless. He had married twice, and separated from both wives ; then had married for the third time, but morganatically, so that even if a son had been born to him, that son, not coming of a royal mother, could not have inherited the crown. Therefore it was practically certain he would die without an heir, so far as the royal succession was concerned, and thus the Danish Crown would have to pass to his sister, Princess Charlotte of Denmark, who had married the Landgrave William of Hesse.

That was plain enough, but what about Schleswig and Holstein ? It was unthinkable the triple kingdom should be torn apart, yet as Christian had no children, and the female line was barred, when Princess Charlotte reigned in Denmark, these two Grand Duchies would pass to Prince Christian of Glucksburg, a cousin of the King, and far removed from the throne in the ordinary way.

Here was the Tsar's idea to solve the difficulty. Let Christian of Glucksburg, the heir of Schleswig-Holstein, marry the daughter and heiress of Princess Charlotte, and let that Princess resign her own right to the throne in his favour. Thus the two countries would remain united, and all would be well.

The marriage was duly arranged, and perhaps of all the countries in Europe, apart from Denmark itself, the one which took the greatest interest in the affair was Great Britain, because both these young people were descended from our George II. The great-grandmother of both had been the Princess Caroline Matilda of Great Britain, who had come as a bride to the throne of Denmark when fifteen years of age.

The marriage between the Prince Christian and Princess Louise was celebrated on May 26th, 1842, and soon after the young couple took up their abode in this Yellow Palace in the comparatively small street in Copenhagen.

Never did an arranged marriage turn out more satisfactorily from every point of view. So far as good looks went, the Prince and Princess were particularly well matched ; it is no flattery to say that both were remarkably handsome ; and, if Prince Christian was apt to be somewhat easy-going in many respects and to trust to his personal charm, which was extremely great, to carry him through life, his Princess was a clever

girl, with wonderful tact and almost miraculous power of organisation and management.

During the first years which followed their wedding day her talents were devoted to the management of her home and her babies, and to the very prosaic work of making both ends meet on a small income ; thus the world at large did not realise what a very capable and clever woman Louise, Princess Christian, really was.

Though it was realised he was the possible heir to the Danish throne, Prince Christian's succession was by no means certain, since heirs far nearer than he might be born. Therefore he was by no means an important royalty, and his means were decidedly limited, so strict economy was the order of the day at the Yellow Palace.

.

A year after their marriage their first child was born, a boy who was christened Frederick, and eighteen months later came the birth of a daughter, for on Sunday, December 1st, 1844, a little Princess made her début in the world.

The bairn that is born on a Sabbath day
Is lucky and bonny and wise and gay.

So runs the old rhyme ; and the saying came true in this case, for surely all good fairies, with the best possible gifts, were in attendance when

that small Princess was presented at the baptismal font to be given the name of Alexandra Caroline Marie Charlotte Louise Julia.

Four other children arrived at the Yellow Palace; the family of Prince and Princess Christian consisted of six in all, and, though much of their stories will be told in due course, perhaps it will be as well to give a list of their names and the positions they were to attain in the world without further delay.

The eldest, Frederick, was to be King of Denmark following in his father's steps; his sister Alexandra to-day is our late lamented Queen Mother. After her followed William, afterwards elected King of Greece. Another girl came next, Dagmar, the Tsarina of Russia, whom we know as the broken woman mourning her murdered son. Then Thyra, now Grand Duchess of Brunswick and mother-in-law of the ex-Kaiser's only daughter; and finally a son, Waldemar, who had married the French Princess, Marie of Orleans.

A number of most romantic stories became afloat concerning the poverty of the family at the Yellow Palace, and of the shifts to which the royalties were obliged to resort. Quite commonly it has been said that Prince Christian gave drawing-lessons and his wife was a dressmaker, a statement which might not seem very absurd in these days, when the proudest of our nobility

are occupied in trade, but in the middle of the nineteenth century any form of commerce was looked down upon by the leaders of Society, and for those with royal blood in their veins to be engaged thus was absolutely unthinkable.

As a matter of fact, the stories are absurd. Prince Christian was a remarkably clever artist, and taught his own children so successfully that one or two of their young relatives joined them in their studies, and to them also he became a drawing-master ; but there was no question of his doing it for money ; it was a labour of love. In the same way Princess Louise was no dress-maker in the professional sense of the word, though she did teach her daughters the art of dressing, and encouraged them to make and remodel their own clothes after their individual ideas. In their early years the Princess attended personally to the education of her children ; they had no governess nor tutor, and literally learnt their lessons at their mother's knee ; but as they grew older this could not continue, particularly as the study of languages was an important part of their training. Indeed, apart from their own familiar Danish, each child was taught to speak and read and write practically every other European language, so that they became familiar with French, German, Italian, and English.

There is a pretty story which illustrates the

manner in which this wise mother-princess trained her little daughters at the Yellow Palace. Princess Alexandra, or Alix as she has been called always in her own family, had a certain frock which she disliked. It may have been useful, but it was not ornamental, neither was it becoming to the little girl's pink-and-white beauty.

"Very well," said the mother, "if you can make a prettier frock you need not wear this, but, remember, you must make the new frock entirely yourself."

With great joy little Alix set to work, and it is said that a very beautiful gown was the result. That well may have been true, for the artistic taste of the Princess Alix is beyond dispute, and needlework was a very important part of the education of the girls. An old lady who was connected with the Court many years ago told how the first fingers of the Princesses used to be all sore and marked with stitching, and for Christmas or birthdays it was a hard and fast rule that they were to give each other or their friends no presents they had not made entirely themselves.

.

In 1852, when Princess Alix was eight years of age, there came a change in the family fortunes.

The idea which had been mooted by the Tsar ten years before bore fruit; the question of the

Danish succession, which had hung in the balance, was settled. A protocol was signed in London definitely acknowledging Prince Christian of Glucksburg as heir to the Danish throne and therefore Crown Prince of Denmark.

Naturally the result was the family leaped into sudden importance, and, though they were still far from rich, money became somewhat more plentiful in the household. The Yellow Palace remained their home, but, in addition, they had a summer mansion at Bernstorff, upon the banks of Copenhagen Harbour. It is a short distance from the city, but is in the midst of pine woods and gardens, so became a real holiday home for the young people.

The arrangement which made Prince Christian heir to the throne was very popular in Denmark, and, of course, in Russia, whence the suggestion had come, but Germany—then a land of many small kingdoms—as a whole took exception to it, and so did Queen Victoria.

Directly the protocol had been signed, King Frederick of Denmark wrote a personal and autograph letter to Her Majesty telling her he had acknowledged Prince Christian as his heir, and the Queen replied by a private letter of which every word was written by her own hand. It runs :

“I have received the letter which your

majesty addressed to me, in which, referring to the necessity of establishing some definite arrangement with regard to the eventual succession of the Crown of Denmark, your majesty is pleased to acquaint me with your opinion that such an arrangement might be made in favour of your majesty's cousin, His Highness Prince Christian of Glucksburg and the issue of his marriage with Princess Louise of Hesse, in favour of whom nearer claimants have renounced their rights."

A very formal, and not at all a friendly, document, very different in its tone from most of the letters Queen Victoria wrote to the other monarchs who were her personal friends. However, after a time Her Majesty became more reconciled to the arrangement, probably for the reason that accounts reached her of the beauty of the Danish Princesses and of their most excellent upbringing. Queen Victoria was the mother of four young sons, and Protestant princesses were not numerous, yet from them only might the British princes look for their wives, so the children at the Yellow Palace deserved consideration.

.

While on the subject of these girlhood's homes of our Queen Mother, it may be interesting to

quote a description of Copenhagen written a few years ago by Lady Wilde in her book, *Driftwood of Scandinavia* :

“At 2 p.m., just seventeen hours after leaving Keil, a vision of steeples and palaces seem rising from the sea on a rich background of green. Nothing could be more striking than the scene. On every side vessels of all nations were crowding to the one great goal where Copenhagen sits throned as a queen commanding the portals of the North Sea and the Baltic. A beautiful picture was formed as we steered for the town, with thirty vessels in our wake, towards the northern Venice, which lay on the waters in a long, horizontal line like the mirage of a city made of cloud palaces, towers, and temples of azure mist.

“Portions of Copenhagen are very quaint and old, but the new quarter is handsome and stately. There are many fine palaces built in the Italian style of stuccoed brick, and rows of private residences. Stone is rarely used, formerly wood was the only material employed, and it is still extensively used for country villas, wood houses being considered the warmest. A villa of wood, painted red, green, blue, pink, or yellow—for they employ all colours—with its verandahs

and slender pillars and variously wrought balconies, has a very pretty effect among the dark foliage of pine and birch."

A beautiful description that, of a beautiful city, and one which gives an excellent idea of the surroundings in which the childhood of the Princess was passed.

.

Princess Alix was quite a little girl when she received an invitation that was to have an important effect upon her after-life.

With her mother she went to a family gathering at Hesse, her mother's home. Upon the banks of the Maine, just opposite the town of Frankfort, there stands to this day a plain, white house of very considerable size, having a square tower at either end, quite an unpretentious place, though one in which many great events in European history must have been discussed. Rumpenheim the house is called, and long ago it belonged to the Landgrave Frederick of Hesse, who had, at his death, left it jointly to his six children, with the request that they and their descendants should make it a rule to meet there once every year. It was a pleasant homely custom, and later on the family at the Yellow Palace were to continue the same plan.

Year after year the descendants of the

Landgrave, with their husbands or wives and their children, met there—a gathering which must have taxed the accommodation of the great palace to the uttermost, particularly as each family had a special suite of rooms apart from the rest, though the young people seem to have met chiefly on common ground, and there began many a lifelong friendship.

To Rumpenheim came the Princess Christian, of course; she had been Princess Louise of Hesse before her marriage, and there came also the Duchess of Cambridge, who had been Princess Augusta of Hesse, daughter of that Landgrave Frederick by whose will this family party gathered, and who had left her home to become the wife of an English prince.

The Duchess of Cambridge and her husband brought their three children, of whom the eldest was Prince George. To us he is known best as the Duke of Cambridge whose statue stands in Whitehall, not far from the Cenotaph, and who for so many years was Commander-in-Chief of the British Army. In these days he was a schoolboy, however, and with him came his two sisters, Princess Augusta, who married the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Strelitz, and Princess Mary Adelaide, the youngest of all.

Princess Mary Adelaide must have been a very charming little girl, and certainly she was good to look upon. Here is a quotation from

the letters of her governess, Mrs. Dalrymple, who wrote :

“ I distinctly recall the . . . appearance of the little Princess, then barely six years old. She was seated in a wickerwork chair, her long hair falling in ringlets over her shoulders. The refined features were beautifully moulded, the blue eyes full of expression . . . the complexion, with its delicate tints, called to mind the inside of some rare shell. . . . Although a large child for her years, she was very upright in figure, and even at this early age the setting of the well-shaped head gave a grace, a dignity, and a free movement which was noticeable all through her life. . . . She was attired in a short white frock and blue sash, with embroidered spencer of muslin, and large white hat, short white socks, and walking shoes with strap and buttons.”

At their first meeting Princess Alix must have been a mere baby and Princess Mary Adelaide a well-grown schoolgirl, for there was eleven years' difference in their ages, and eleven years seems a very great difference at such times. Probably schoolgirl Princess Mary Adelaide “ mothered ” the charming baby from Denmark, and each time they met the links thus begun in the past were riveted anew, till a very warm

and truly sisterly affection sprang up between them. It is easy to picture small Mary Adelaide nursing still smaller Alexandra in her strong young arms and telling her of her home in England at what was then the little village of Kew. Kew Gardens were almost as lovely as they are to-day, and the old Palace, now a museum, had been a royal residence until a little while before. The Duke of Cambridge and his wife and children made their home in a house known as Cambridge Cottage, on the south side of Kew Green, and doubtless in talking of all this Princess Mary Adelaide wakened an interest in far-off England in the heart of the baby Princess who listened.

The Duke of Cambridge had a London residence in Piccadilly, and, concerning the time of her residence there, a story of the little Princess is often told, one that is pretty enough to be repeated here—perhaps it is one of those Princess Alix heard at Rumpenheim.

Princess Mary Adelaide was in the habit of taking a daily walk in the Park with her governess, and in those days, before organised street-cleaning had been thought of, crossing-sweepers were quite important personages. A crippled old man swept the way across Piccadilly which the childish feet trod on their way to the Park, and it had been arranged that Princess Mary Adelaide should give him a sixpence every time she used the way.

One day the small lady, being hungry, was so

impatient to return for breakfast—they took very early morning walks—that she ran home in such haste that she forgot all about the crossing-sweeper. The Duke of Cambridge happened to be at the window looking out for his daughter, and when she appeared in the breakfast-room asked her about the crossing-sweeper. The child confessed she had forgotten the old man, on which her father rang the bell for a footman and told him to escort the Princess and her governess right back to the Park, that they might give the old man his sixpence, and at the same time impress upon her mind the lesson never to forget a promise or to neglect those who were poor.

The Princess Christian of Denmark and the Duchess of Cambridge watched the growing affection between their young daughters with satisfaction, and presently they began to think of the future and to whisper of what might be.

The outcome was the Duchess of Cambridge suggested Princess Alexandra should come on a visit to her in the English home.

.

Thus, when she was ten years old, the little Princess came to England, and, with the Duchess of Cambridge and little Princess Mary, attended a children's party at Buckingham Palace given by Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. That much is history, but connected with it

there is a story which may be true or may not ; still, it is quite what might have been expected to happen, so shall be told.

The Prince of Wales, a small boy, had heard a great deal about the golden-haired little girl who was visiting his "Aunt Cambridge," and grew rather tired of hearing of her perfections.

"I don't like little girls who have golden hair," he is reported to have said. "I don't want to see her at all."

His tutor was shocked ; little boys were not supposed to speak their minds in those days.

"You have no right to say that," said this gentleman gravely. "Besides, you have been reading Danish history, and have revelled in the romance of the adventures of the Vikings. Surely you would wish to see a princess who is a daughter of these Vikings of old ?"

That altered the case. Master Bertie, as he was called in his family, had visions of heroes in chain mail and winged helmets, and thought their descendant might be worthy of the praise which had been showered upon her, after all.

"All right," he said ; "I don't mind seeing her if she's a Viking."

Of course he had to go to the children's party, considering it was given in his honour, and presently they showed him little Princess Alix sitting on a sofa nursing an enormous doll which Queen Victoria had just given her.

The Prince of Wales turned away in disgust. "Why, she's not a Viking at all," he said; "she's just an ordinary girl, only she's very pretty."

And he absolutely refused to have anything to say to her.

Thus, if we can believe the story, the first introduction of His Royal Highness Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and Her Royal Highness Princess Alexandra of Denmark, was anything but the success which had been hoped.

They were to meet again in the time to come.



QUEEN ALEXANDRA

*From a Painting by the late Edward Hughes
(Exclusive copynigh, Alice Hughes)*

CHAPTER II

INFORMAL LOVE-STORY AND FORMAL BETROTHAL

Possible brides for a future king—The Duchess of Cambridge lays plans—King Leopold, matchmaker—Quite grown up—Her first photograph—The romance of a picture—A prince incognito—The “accidental” meeting—Love at first sight—Death of the Prince Consort—Edward the Peacemaker—The sisters of the Yellow Palace—Picnic holidays—The engagement ring.

As heir to one of the greatest kingdoms in the world, Albert Prince of Wales, was obliged to choose his wife from a limited number of ladies, since in those days any suggestion of a prince of the blood royal marrying one of our nobilities would have been received with horror. The sons and daughters of George III. had done so indeed, but not in a satisfactory manner, for a number of scandals had resulted, and because of these scandals that King had brought in the Royal Marriage Act, forbidding any prince marrying without the consent of the Sovereign. Society, being very strait-laced and very snobbish, absolutely insisted its royalties should intermarry, a view with which Queen Victoria was in strong agreement.

There were five Protestant princesses in Europe of somewhere about suitable age, and from his cradle the young Prince had been brought up with the idea that he must marry one of these five. If all stories are true, his mother and father went a little further. They had definitely decided upon a German princess, and said they would have her and none other for their daughter-in-law. Their own marriage had been arranged from their babyhood, and was ideally happy, therefore their son must marry to order in the same way. Their eldest child, the Princess Royal of Great Britain, had done their bidding, and at seventeen had become the wife of handsome Frederick William of Prussia, therefore her brother must obey the parental authority likewise.

Only unfortunately his sister's marriage had not turned out well, and, profiting by that example, the Prince was by no means anxious to obey blindly. In addition, he was deeply attached to and much influenced by his aunt, the Duchess of Cambridge, and she had made up her mind that Alix of Denmark was the wife he should choose.

The then Danish Ambassador in London, Admiral Van Dockun, later published his memoirs, and in them told how the proposed marriage between Alix of Denmark and the Prince of Wales was discussed at his embassy in London

for years before the young couple met, even before that children's party, and how Sir Augustus Paget, our Ambassador in Copenhagen, took a hand in the game and praised the young Prince to the Danish royalties, while he wrote glowing accounts of the young Princess to the British royalties, all of which has been told in detail also in a most fascinating book by the brilliant Lady Paget, wife of Sir Augustus, a lady who was the confidante of Queen Victoria, and acknowledges she played a very important part in bringing about the betrothal of the Prince of Wales and Princess Alix of Denmark.

.

Meanwhile, the Duchess of Cambridge, intent on her pet scheme, had won over a very important ally in the person of Leopold I., King of the Belgians, brother of the Duchess of Kent, Queen Victoria's mother.

King Leopold had begun life as quite a poor man, considering he was a prince, and had come to England in the train of a certain German royalty who had been elected as the husband of the Princess Charlotte. The girl was presented to her fiancé at a time when he had taken too much to drink, with the result she turned from him in disgust, and, in her indignation, had her attention attracted by the very handsome young man who was one of the Prince's suite. She

was told he was a prince also, Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, and, though he had no great position, he had plenty of powerful friends, and the end was that he and the Princess Charlotte married. As it seemed certain that when her father died she would be Queen of Great Britain, with this handsome Prince as her consort, Prince Leopold and his girl-wife made their home in the Palace of Claremont, and there he tried to become as English as possible. Within a year of the marriage the nation was shocked to learn that their young Princess had died in childbirth, leaving a stillborn baby, and that the doctor who had attended her, feeling that public opinion blamed him—though later medical knowledge has cleared his name—had shot himself within a few hours of the tragedy.

In St. George's Chapel in Windsor Castle is the monument erected to Princess Charlotte and her baby, a very wonderful piece of carving.

Naturally the death of the Princess altered the whole succession, and the next heir to the throne was the Regent's brother, the Duke of Clarence, who hastened to get married as soon as possible. No heirs were born to him, however, so the next brother, the Duke of Kent, was the heir; and when the marriage of King William IV. was found to be childless—for William IV. the Duke of Clarence had become—it was plain the throne would be the Duke

of Kent's in due course, and, as he was unmarried also, he set out in great haste to look for a wife.

Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg would seem to have been an inveterate match-maker, perhaps because his own marriage with Princess Charlotte was so happy, and, though he was almost a youth, still, he managed to bring about the marriage of his sister, a young widow, with the Duke of Kent. Some two years later the Duke died, but left a baby daughter, and that child succeeded to her father's heritage as Queen Victoria.

Widowed for the second time while still young, it was natural the Duchess of Kent should turn to her brother for help and advice in many things. Thus Prince Leopold of Saxe-Coburg became practically the guardian of his little niece, who stood in the place that would have been held by his own baby had it lived. "Dear Uncle Leopold" is mentioned again and again in the letters of Queen Victoria, and there is no doubt that his influence was the strongest of any over her early life.

Thirteen years after his girl-wife had died, Belgium declared herself an independent country, and, looking for a king, elected Leopold for the throne. Thus Leopold of Saxe-Coburg, who had so many British interests and was so closely connected with our land, became Leopold I., King of the Belgians. Feeling that his new

rank made it necessary he should marry again, and so secure an heir, he selected another very wealthy princess, Louise of France. Yet, in spite of the claims of his kingdom and all his other interests, he continued match-making, and he and his sister brought about the marriage of her child, Princess Victoria, with their nephew, Albert Saxe-Coburg, the son of their elder brother. That alliance, though arranged in the nursery, had been ideal ; and now the Duchess of Cambridge called in King Leopold's help to bring about the betrothal of the Prince of Wales and the Danish Princess.

.

Early marriages were the order of the day in the mid-nineteenth century, particularly where great families were concerned. All the children of Queen Victoria—excepting Princess Beatrice—married very young, so while the Prince was in the schoolroom, if not actually in the nursery, the advisers of the Court and the head of the realm were concerning themselves as to the choice of his future wife.

Just after the royal wedding which had given his young sister to her Prussian husband, it was decided the boy Prince should tour Europe with his tutors, making specially long stays at the German and Austrian Courts, which were the homes of the four Princesses most favoured

on his behalf. Ostensibly the trip was an educational one ; it was to enable the Prince to see other countries and to study their languages and manners at first hand, but probably he knew perfectly well what the inner meaning of the arrangement was. While he was at Berlin, where the first of the Princesses was duly presented to him, he saw something of his young sister's married life, and from that time he had a rooted objection to Prussianism in its worst form, and left the city not at all favourably impressed with the Princess he was expected to admire.

The same thing happened with the other three ladies ; and King Leopold of the Belgians and the Duchess of Cambridge were delighted. They saw the Princess they had selected had a good chance of being his choice, though he and she had not met since that children's party of five or six years before.

.

The sixteenth birthday of Princess Alix was the most important in her life. On it she was told she might consider herself grown up, her hair was "done" in formal fashion, her dresses were made long, and, in order to celebrate the change, she was taken to a photographer that she might sit for her portrait ; and that was an adventure in itself, because in the 'sixties of the

last century photography was a new discovery, and it was thought a very wonderful happening to pose before the camera.

The photograph taken on that eventful birthday is in existence, and shows a slim young girl looking extremely childlike in her white muslin frock, a strip of black velvet fastened tightly round her throat, her hair brushed straight back from her forehead. Such a dress and such a style of hairdressing would make most people appear downright plain, not to mention the efforts of that photographer, who knew nothing of the art of retouching, and kept his sitter motionless in a strong light for a full minute at the least. Therefore it says much for the extreme loveliness of the Princess that she came through the ordeal triumphantly and even looked beautiful in that picture.

The photograph fell into the hands of the Prince of Wales about the time he had finished interviewing the last of the German and Austrian princesses, and concerning that part of the story there are many various and conflicting tales. By far the most romantic is the following :

When he left the Austrian Court, where his visit had been marked with much splendour, he accepted the offer of an Italian prince for a few days' sport at his shooting-box. While there he met a young officer in the Italian Army who became confidential, confiding to the Prince that

he was deeply in love with the most beautiful girl in the world and hoped to make her his wife.

"May I show Your Royal Highness her portrait?" he said. And, on receiving permission, he drew a card from his pocket-book. "It has been taken by this new process that is called photography. I have several specimens, as I am interested in the discovery."

The Prince took the photograph, looked at it long, then returned it.

"I congratulate you," he said. "Your fiancée is indeed beautiful."

The beaming young officer glanced at the card before putting it back in his case, and flushed.

"I beg Your Royal Highness's pardon, but I have made a most foolish mistake," he said. "That photograph is not the portrait of my fiancée, which is here—the other is one of the specimens of photography I have spoken about. It is a portrait of Princess Alexandra of Denmark."

"Is it a good likeness?" asked the Prince, with sudden eagerness, and the other shrugged his shoulders.

"Excellent so far as features go," he said. "But it cannot do justice to her colouring, which is one of her greatest charms. She has hair of a golden brown, and a perfect complexion."

"Will you allow me to keep that photograph?"

asked the Prince. And naturally such a request was a command which had to be obeyed.

Another version, very probably the true one, says that the photograph was shown to the Prince by the Italian royalty who was his host. It was produced with pretended carelessness, and shown as a specimen of this new photography in which everyone was interested ; but a hidden motive underlay the act, for the Italian Prince was a sympathiser with the Duchess of Cambridge and King Leopold and their anti-German Princess determination.

Still another story is that the photograph really did come into the hands of the Prince by accident, and that there was no motive beyond a wish to interest him in photography on the part of the gentleman who brought it to his notice.

Be the truth what it may, it may be accepted as an historic fact that while in that Italian shooting-box the Prince saw the photograph of the Princess, and—made up his mind then and there.

A little later His Royal Highness was in Paris—according to the Court Circular ; but gossip, which probably is correct in this case, says he was absent for several days from the French capital, and concerning his whereabouts there was a good deal of mystery. The explanation generally given was that, attended by a few

of his suite, he had travelled to Denmark to catch a secret glimpse of the Princess.

The Danish royal family were, and are, allowed much more freedom than is enjoyed by other royalties, even those of our own land to-day. The Danish King walks or rides through the streets practically unattended, and meets and talks to his subjects much as an English country squire will chat with the people of his village. If this were the case with the ruling monarch, how much more so must it have been with Prince Christian, who, though heir to the throne, was very far from being well off.

So gossip tells us the Prince of Wales, visiting Copenhagen incognito as an ordinary tourist, stood in the street to watch the three daughters of the Prince taking their daily walks with their governess.

Under the circumstances, he could not make their acquaintance, thus he was unbetrothed still when he returned to England.

A considerable part of the boyhood of the Prince had been spent at the White Lodge in Richmond Park, where he had lived with his tutors, and during that time he had been in the habit of rowing from Richmond to Mortlake, whence he would walk to Cambridge Cottage. As he grew up this pleasant intimacy with his "Uncle and Aunt Cambridge" and their children increased rather than diminished. The first

dinner-party he ever attended was at Cambridge Cottage, and he was on terms of closest friendship with all his three cousins.

On his return to England this time, we may be sure he was particularly glad to go to Kew, for there was Princess Mary Adelaide, ready to talk to him of her "Dear Alix," who was his "Dear Alix" also, and there was "Aunt Cambridge" with a pleasant surprise for him in the shape of a beautiful miniature on ivory, a portrait of the Danish Princess which did justice to her wonderful colouring.

Soon after, he told his parents his mind was made up; he would have Princess Alexandra for his bride and no other.

There was trouble in the royal household, Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort having set their minds on that German daughter-in-law, and Her Majesty not being in the habit of having her wishes disregarded. When the news of the young Prince's determination was whispered, statesmen looked grave. Denmark was such an unimportant country, they pointed out, and—worse still—there was bad blood between Denmark and Prussia. Trouble was brewing there.

Probably the advisers expected the Prince to give way. He was so affable, and anxious to please, they could not have expected any very great difficulty, for, as is so often the case, his kindness was mistaken for weakness. Here

they were disillusioned, however. Albert, Prince of Wales, felt his life's happiness was at stake ; and very properly determined to be true to the lady of his choice.

In the end Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort determined to make the best of the position, and wrote to Prince Christian telling him what was proposed and suggesting the two young people should meet in Copenhagen.

In the reply was a suggestion that surely emanated from the motherly yet clever brain of the mother of the Princess—it was that, though the Prince might come to Copenhagen later and be royally and formally welcomed, as a start he and the girl of his choice should meet as if by accident and make each other's acquaintance far from the pomp and ceremony of Courts.

With this idea Queen Victoria and her husband were in agreement, so the little plot was duly carried out.

.

Probably the Prince of Wales was in the secret ; he was too astute to be kept in the dark easily ; but seventeen-year-old Alexandra did not dream what plans were afoot when she was told, as the time of the yearly visit to Rumpenheim was at hand, her mother and brothers and sisters would go there direct, but she and her father would travel in more leisurely fashion and do some

sight-seeing on their way. He was deeply interested in all educational subjects ; he had done much in the training of his children's thoughts ; and now he would show Alexandra the places of interest *en route*, and they might do a little sketching, both being enthusiastic artists.

Their first stop was at the city of Speier—or Spires, as it is spelt sometimes—in Bavaria, and, as its cathedral has been one of the most celebrated in Europe for fully eight hundred years, they must devote some time to it, especially as it contains very fine frescoes which the artist-Prince wished to show his artist-daughter.

There came a day when he and she stood before those frescoes and he began his art lecture, but his attention wandered a good deal, his remarks lacked their usual clarity, because all the time he was looking out for the approach of a party of strangers whom he expected to appear “by accident.”

In due time they came, a little party of military officers, to judge by their bearing, and in their midst a nineteen-year-old stripling, with the elderly gentleman who was his tutor.

The Crown Prince went forward eagerly if, as recognising an acquaintance—as indeed he did ; introductions followed, but names and titles were indistinctly spoken, so that the Princess was not clear as to the identity of the youth who stayed by her side, making himself very

agrecable indeed, while the elders of the party drifted a little away.

We may be sure the handsome young Prince made the most of that opportunity.

The next day a trip to Heidelberg was planned. By this time his identity had been confessed, the two parties amalgamated openly, and the Prince of Wales never left the side of the girl he admired, while she was happy in his company. In all honesty it may be said that it was a case of love at first sight between that boy and girl.

Those two days were all the time of wooing that was allowed, then the Prince had to tear himself away, but the young couple had arranged to write to each other, and we may be sure they had come to a very good understanding, whatever their elders might say.

The Princess and her father continued their journey to Rumpenheim, and there found her cousins gathered for that regular yearly visit, amongst them that Princess Mary of Cambridge whom Princess Alix loved as her sister. It is told that one of the other girls laughingly asked Princess Alexandra what the Prince of Wales was like, on which she blushing drew a locket from her bosom.

"I have his portrait here," she said.

.

Thus from all evidence it does seem certain

that Albert, Prince of Wales, and Alexandra of Denmark actually fell in love with each other before the days of their betrothal, and were a very happy young couple. She was beautiful and charming as any fairy princess, and he was a good-looking young fellow who owned that nameless gift we call charm, the charm that made him the most popular person in the world for close upon seventy years, and has been inherited to the full by his grandson, who is our Prince of Wales to-day.

The Prince wrote a long letter to his father, which was private, but its trend may be judged by the following entry in the diary of the Prince Consort: "We hear nothing but excellent accounts of the Princess Alexandra. The young people seem to have taken a warm liking to each other."

After that the wooing was interrupted. Perhaps the Prince's parents had some lingering hope that he might change his mind even yet. At any rate, he went to Cambridge to continue his university career, while the Princess resumed her quiet life in Copenhagen. After remaining at Cambridge for a term, it had been settled that the Prince should visit the Holy Land, and that autumn, while he was at college, painters and decorators were busy setting the great mansion, Marlborough House, in readiness for his occupation.

In the November of that year, 1861, the Prince of Wales celebrated his twentieth birthday, and came up from Cambridge University specially to pass the day with his parents. In the evening a dinner-party was given at Buckingham Palace in his honour. It was his duty to escort his mother to her place at the table, and he sat with her on one hand and his father on the other—a very stately yet happy family party. It was the last time the three were together without the shadow of tragedy looming close at hand.

A month later the Prince Consort sickened with what had been believed to be an ordinary chill but developed into typhoid fever with extraordinary rapidity, and he died with dreadful suddenness.

It is almost impossible for us to realise the consternation into which the nation was thrown by the tragedy, and matters were made worse, so far as trade was concerned, by the fact that preparations for holding an international exhibition in the following spring were well advanced already. The exhibition which had been held ten years before in the Crystal Palace in Hyde Park (the same building which is at Sydenham, though its site was different) had been an enormous success, and it was hoped to follow it with another triumph. Prince Albert had been the prime mover in both ventures; now he was removed all was chaotic confusion; the

traders of the country talked gloomily of trade depression, and the royal widow was prostrate in her grief. She was a ruling monarch no longer; she was a woman mourning for the husband she adored, unable to rouse herself from her crushing sorrow.

From the moment of his father's death the twenty-year-old Prince of Wales found himself thrust into a new and very difficult position.

Even his name was changed to an extent. Though, in common with most royalties, he had received a whole string of names at the baptismal font, he had been called by the first only hitherto; and in very old prayer-books the prayer still runs for "Albert, Prince of Wales." In his own family he was known as Bertie.

Now Queen Victoria decided that the history of that time must have only one Albert, and he must be surnamed "The Good"; thus his son should be known henceforth by his two baptismal names, and be "Albert Edward, Prince of Wales."

Had Queen Victoria abdicated, as, in the first throes of her most bitter sorrow, it was rumoured she intended to do, and have handed the Crown, with its responsibilities, to her twenty-year-old son, it may have been that he would have found the burden too heavy for his young shoulders,

yet, as things were, the situation became harder for him in very many respects.

She kept the Crown, but would not bear its burden.

The Prince was given no real authority, but was expected to attend all public functions and to make himself the head of Society, besides identifying himself with the Government of the country and being familiar with all the social and political movements of the time, in addition to keeping on friendly terms with the royalties of other lands. Yet he was unable to act with any power, having to refer to his mother in her retirement on all important questions; and probably not the least difficult of the problems he had to face was the pleasing of the Queen, for Her Majesty became decidedly difficult as the years of her retirement increased.

"Edward the Peacemaker" the Prince was called in the days of his mature manhood, but the title was deserved in those far-off days when his boyhood had been hardly left behind. Only those who have access to private papers and documents concerning Court life can realise how thankless was the task thrust upon young Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, nor how splendidly he rose to the occasion.

Mistakes he made, of course—as who would not?—but they were few and far between. The wonder is that they were so rare; for surely

not one young man in ten thousand—no, not one in a hundred thousand—thrust into the limelight and burdened with terrific responsibilities such as his, would have come through the ordeal so brilliantly.

.

Almost directly after the death of his father the Prince of Wales started on his tour of the Holy Land, as had been arranged previously, and in consequence he did not see his Danish Princess for a considerable time.

The British public at large, not sharing Court secrets, believed he was heart-whole still, and were waiting anxiously for news of a royal betrothal, but those in his confidence knew the matter was settled, and that the Princess Alexandra was a far more important personage than she had ever been before. From the position of daughter of a prince in quite a secondary kingdom, she became the prospective queen of the British Empire, though that name had not been bestowed upon it as yet.

For the present her life remained a very quiet one at the Yellow Palace. Her parents insisted that she should work harder than ever at her studies, because, although she had had a long course of lessons in English already, it was necessary that she should speak the language as well as she did her own, and we all know that to do

that is no easy task, even though you may have a special gift for languages and the benefit of the best tutors.

In addition, music occupied very much of her time. In this direction she had shown very great and unusual talent, and it had been fostered and encouraged to the utmost. Many years afterwards Her Royal Highness was granted the degree of Doctor of Music at Oxford University, and everyone who had heard her play or who had spoken to her on the subject of the art she loved, agrees that the honour was no empty compliment, but was most richly deserved. It was a very happy family life led at the Yellow Palace while the young people were growing up. All of them were most truly and deeply attached to their parents, and among themselves there was deep brotherly and sisterly love, though, as is the case with almost all families, they rather "paired off," and it became an acknowledged thing that the Princess Alexandra was most devoted to the brother next to her in age—handsome Prince William. However he and she were inseparable in private life, at all public functions the Princess was accompanied by her sister Dagmar, and it is impossible to imagine a fairer picture than the two girls made, for both were very beautiful—this can be written without any accusation of flattery; it is an absolute fact—and each was of a separate type!

Alexandra with a fair skin, blue eyes, and golden hair; Dagmar with just the brunette touch that deepened her loveliness.

Little Thyra, the youngest girl of all, was in the nursery with her brother Waldemar. Indeed, dearly as the family of the Crown Prince loved each other, it may be said that Thyra was practically a stranger to her elder sisters. They made a pet of her, but there could be no confidence between them, for they had married and gone to their homes in other countries before she was out of the schoolroom.

In the summer following the death of our Prince Consort the Prince of Wales and his bride-to-be met again, and once more it was away from the formal etiquette of the Court.

King Leopold acted as fairy godfather on this occasion. He invited the Crown Prince and Princess of Denmark, with their eldest daughter, to visit him at Brussels, and asked that the Prince of Wales might come at the same time. Then, having gathered the young people together, he practically set them free from Court etiquette, arranging a series of informal picnics and excursions during which ceremony was dispensed with.

At the picnics we are told the young men lighted the fire in gipsy fashion, and the girls boiled the kettles and laid the table; and here Princess Alexandra proved that she had every

kind of housewifely virtue, including a particular skill in making exceptionally good coffee, and it was here also that she showed her great talent for drawing.

One of the many excursions had been made to Vilers Abbey, and she made a pencilled sketch of the old fabric. On that day, so it is said, the Prince told her that he loved her, and afterwards asked for the sketch she had made, saying he should keep it always as a memento of the happiest day of his life.

Probably it was at this time he placed his engagement ring on the finger of the Princess, a ring she wore from that time, afterwards serving as the keeper of her wedding ring. In those days what were called initial rings were fashionable for betrothals. They were set with stones of which the initials spelt some special word. The most popular ring was a "regard" one—set with a Ruby, Emerald, Garnet, Amethyst, Ruby, Diamond. But the Prince improved upon this, and gave his future wife a ring with Beryl, Emerald, Ruby, Turquoise, Jacinth, and Emerald—the initials B.E.R.T.I.E. standing for Bertie. The "J" standing in the place of "I."

After that the two were acknowledged lovers by their friends, yet they were not formally betrothed because the consent of Queen Victoria

was lacking, and she was so absorbed in her grief for her dead husband she refused to concern herself with the affairs of her son.

All the same, we may take it that the young people were happy enough in each other's society, and later on they took quite long trips together, with her father as chaperon. One of these was to Cologne, where they bought bottles of the scent eau-de-Cologne for their friends, and thus started the world-wide popularity of the fragrance which had had only a local fame before.

Britain, having been plunged into mourning by the death of the Prince Consort, found its trade suffering badly, and it was felt that the rejoicing attendant upon the royal betrothal and wedding were needed to waken matters up. Still Queen Victoria refused to discuss the wedding. Her son's happiness and her nation's welfare had to go by the board while she gave way to her bitter grief, and at this juncture King Leopold, sensible as always, took a further part in the situation.

Queen Victoria, trying to find health after her terrible blow, went to visit Rosenau Castle in Coburg, the birthplace of her beloved husband, and on her way home stopped at Laeken to pay a strictly private visit to her uncle. There Princess Alexandra was presented to her. There, at the suggestion of King Leopold, Her Majesty gave her formal consent to the engagement, stipulating

that the news was not to be made public until a year had passed after the date of her husband's death.

However, the Prince pressed the matter, and in the end Her Majesty so far relented that she consented to receive the Princess. So an invitation was dispatched asking her and her father to visit England.

In Denmark the real and inner meaning of that invitation must have been perfectly understood, but here in England people had no idea of the budding romance that was absorbing so great a part of the thoughts of their future king.

Princess Alix might truly have said, "I came, I saw, I conquered"; for even Queen Victoria, always difficult to turn from her purpose, had to confess her son had chosen one who was well fitted to be a queen.

CHAPTER III

BETROTHED

“Gaiety” of Courts—Bismarck’s anger—Preparing the trousseau—Wedding gifts—The People’s Dowry—Leaving home—Our first ironclad—The bride-elect’s “smart” dress—The royal kiss—The noble engine-driver—At the Bricklayers’ Arms.

It was in the month of November the Princess Alexandra paid her first grown-up visit to England, but the visit had to be strictly private in consideration of the Queen’s sorrow.

It was to Osborne that the Danish Crown Prince brought his daughter, and there he left her in the most depressing surroundings in which a young girl could be placed. She was in a strange country, among strangers, and around were sighs and tears and sounds of mourning—such mourning as we can hardly realise in these days, for the heaviest of crape and a dreadful fabric known as crape-cloth were the only materials allowed to be worn—and though many months had passed since the death, a single note of laughter had to be hushed lest it should be construed as disrespect for the one who had gone.

Leaving Osborne, the Princess Alexandra accompanied Queen Victoria to Windsor, and here she had a welcome from that dear friend of her childhood—sweet, kindly, sensible, jolly Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge. Here is a quotation from the diary of that Princess which gives an idea of the life led at the court :

“ We reached Windsor Castle about twelve, and were shown into our own Lancaster Tower Rooms where we were presently joined by *darling Alix, too overjoyed at the meeting to speak*, and by dear Alice and Louis. After a while Alix took me to her room and then we returned to the others and went with Alice to see her room in the Devil’s Tower. . . . Here the poor dear Queen joined us and remained with us for some time. We lunched without Her Majesty and Beatrice came in afterwards, then we went to Alix’s room again, afterwards accompanying her to all the state rooms—Mama, Alix, Louis and Helena being of the party. On our return, Mama and I were summoned to the Queen’s closet and had a nice little talk with her. We were hurried off shortly before five, Alix, Alice and the others rushing after us to bid us good-bye.”

Can anyone imagine a duller day, and is there not a whole world of pathos in the few words

that tell how Princess Alix was speechless with joy at meeting her girlish friend ?

What confidences must have passed between Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge and the Danish Princess in the brief interval when they met together in "Alix's room" ! For the rest the only entertainment seemed to have been to wander through the shrouded magnificence of the state apartments of Windsor, or to see the grim architecture of the oldest part of the castle where Princess Alix was quartered.

Yet we talk glibly of the gaiety of courts !

The others who are mentioned in the family party are the Grand Duke and Duchess of Hesse, Alice and Louis, the former our own Princess Alice, Queen Victoria's most devoted daughter. Though she was one of the sweetest and best women who ever lived, one can hardly fancy Princess Alice, her young life darkened by sorrow at her father's death and by her labour of love in trying to comfort the Queen, exactly a lively and sympathetic companion to such a girl as Alexandra, while Louis of Hesse was a grim man who has been described as having the air of an undertaker out on business. He could not take a cheerful view of life even in these days when his honeymoon was hardly over.

The "Helena" was the late Princess Christian, the third daughter of Queen Victoria, the mother of the Princess Marie Louise, who is so well

known in connection with all good works in these days ; and of course “ Mama ” was the Duchess of Cambridge.

Still, however dull these days were they held many arrangements for the marriage, and indeed the whirl of preparation had begun already. A little later the engagement was announced, to the joy of the nation, but there followed trouble in Europe, especially at the Prussian Court. It is said that when the news reached him, Prince Bismack, the man of blood and iron who was the power behind the Prussian throne, actually foamed at the mouth in his anger that the German Princess had been rejected, and rushing into the presence of the Princess William—our Princess Royal, and sister to the Prince of Wales—he upbraided her in insulting terms, declaring that she had plotted to prevent the German marriage.

With ordinary folk it is usual for the marriage ceremony to take place from the home of the bride, but invariably the rule is altered where the heir to a throne is concerned, his marriage being held in the country he will rule instead of in that of the bride. Thus the wedding must take place in England in that St. George’s Chapel, Windsor, where the Princess Charlotte lies buried ; and the date was fixed for the following March.

Back to her own country Princess Alix went, not sorry to leave the gloomy British court behind, we may think, and for the three months which intervened before her wedding she could hardly have had a moment to call her own.

Among the other calls upon her time the most important was her preparation to enter the Church of England. She and her sisters had been brought up as Lutherans, which can best be described as a faith nearly approaching that of the Wesleyans here, but now the chaplain of the British Legation at Copenhagen had to take her in hand before she was duly baptized and confirmed as a member of our national Church.

Denmark was wild with enthusiasm over the marriage. Everywhere could be seen medals containing portraits of the young bride and bridegroom-elect, while one of the leading shops at Copenhagen had a display of the lingerie of the Princess, and all the fashionable people of the neighbourhood flocked to the establishment to examine it.

Every garment was hand-made—in those days the sewing-machine had hardly been invented, so it could have been nothing else—but the fineness and beauty of the embroidery won wonder and admiration from all, and every garment was worked with the initials of the Princess and the likeness of the British crown.

.

As to the wedding presents that rolled in, there was not room for them in the Yellow Palace, so many had to make their way to England in advance, though others remained on show at Copenhagen until the last moment.

Being an exceptionally poor man for his position, Prince Christian could not give his daughter a dowry, on which the Danish people, with sturdy independence, subscribed among themselves and raised the sum of one hundred thousand kroner—something like eight thousand pounds of our money at the then rate of exchange—which was called The People's Dowry. It was a small sum compared with the ten thousand a year Britain settled on the Princess, but it came from the love of loyal hearts, and as such was a very great treasure indeed.

Jewels there were in plenty among the wedding gifts, among them a wonderful diamond and pearl necklace from the King of Denmark; but there were other presents of more personal interest which must have been nearer to the heart of the young Princess. For instance, there was an oil painting of her brothers and sisters, a group that has a pathos now, and always has hung in a place of honour in Queen Alexandra's private apartments.

Among the jewels were a necklace, stomacher and bracelets of diamonds, from the prince; while Queen Victoria gave the bride-elect a set

of opals and diamonds with an enormous amount of gold plate for her household ; while from King Leopold of the Belgians, the triumphant match-maker, was a gown of Brussels lace, then very fashionable wear, and the twelve chief prayers of the Church of England printed on vellum. And then, among all this grandeur, there arrived a village pastor with a little basket containing vases decorated with the Danish national colours. He came from a tiny village nearest to that country house at Bernstorff where so many happy holidays had been spent, and the little vases had been bought by the villagers who had known and loved Princess Alexandra in her early girlhood.

We are told her eyes were filled with tears as she took the gift from the good man's hand and told him those painted vases should have a place of honour amid the brilliant display.

.

The day on which Alexandra was to leave her girlhood's home dawned at last.

The week before had seen Copenhagen given up to every kind of gaiety, and when the bride-elect started her journey, never, surely, had been seen such a company before ; for her father, mother and all her brothers and sisters were to cross the sea with her. Home ties, always so strong with them, took a double hold about their



Photo Press

THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER SISTER PRINCESS DAGMAR
Dwelling in Hyde Park

Shortly after the visit to England when this portrait was made the Princess Dagmar became the Empress Maria of Russia

hearts at this first parting. With pathetic affection these young brothers and sisters clung till the last moment, to the girl they loved, and all felt to the full the penalty which comes to those born in high estate.

From an ordinary home an ordinary girl goes to marry the man she loves, but in most cases she makes her new home in the next street, or at most a tram or bus ride away from her old one. Where royalties are concerned all is different. A royal bride marries a man of another nationality, she goes from her kindred, from her home ties, she lives in a distant land, she learns to speak a foreign language, she worships in a new church.

The day on which Princess Alexandra left home was kept as a public holiday in Copenhagen. Cheering crowds thronged the streets, windows and balconies were filled with flowers, flags and banners fluttered in the wind, and through those decorated ways the girl-Princess, with smiles on her lips yet tears in her eyes, drove in an open carriage. By the time the railway station was reached that carriage was piled with flowers, for all the waiting crowd had pelted their Princess with bouquets.

The railway station was gaily decorated ; there she had to receive an address before the train steamed away at last carrying the excited family.

The journey was a royal progress, and it was

then Alexandra first tasted the power and the pomp which was to be hers.

From Copenhagen the family journeyed to Hamburg, where they rested for awhile, then went to Hanover; and it is said that the first mention was made of the marriage which would make baby Princess Thyra rightful Queen of Hanover in the after-days.

Cologne was the next stage of that bridal journey, the place of pleasant memories for the bride-elect, and there the British residents assembled at the station to give her a warm greeting. From Cologne they passed to Brussels to stay with King Leopold, and in her diary the Princess tells us that the engine which drew the train from Cologne to Brussels was called *The Blucher*, while queerly enough the driver was named *Wellington*. This was a striking coincidence, especially in those days when the Battle of Waterloo, with its alliance of British and Germans against the French, was not such ancient history as it is to-day.

After a little rest at Brussels, if rest it could be called when almost every hour was filled with pomp and ceremony, the travellers took train to Antwerp, where, on the River Scheldt, lay a steam yacht flying the British flag. It was the *Victoria and Albert*, Queen Victoria's special yacht, come to carry the girl-bride to her bridegroom.

When Alexandra went into her cabin she found it a bower of roses. The decorations had been carried out specially by the order of the Prince of Wales.

Down the Belgian river the gallant yacht steamed with flags flying, and when she entered the North Sea at Flushing a squadron of British warships were waiting to do the Princess honour, among them the historic *Warrior*, our first iron-clad.

With the warships as her escort, the *Victoria and Albert* steamed across the sea, and though the time of year was March, even the elements were kind to the bride. The month must have come in "like a lamb" that year, since we are told there was scarcely a whisper of wind and the sea was calm as a mill pond. At eight in the morning of March 7th, 1863, the ships entered the Thames to find the river crowded with every possible craft; boats of every shape and size had put out to give a royal welcome to the royal bride.

From Margate a special boat appeared, and there the yacht stopped to receive the Mayor, who read an address of welcome. Southend and Sheerness, on opposite sides of the wide river, were gay with streaming bunting, and when the yacht came to anchor off Gravesend the watchers saw the Princess standing on the deck beside her mother—a girlish figure, wearing a dress of mauve Irish poplin, put on in

honour of the Irish people, over it a flowing cloak of purple velvet edged with dark fur, and on her head a poke bonnet that seemed made entirely of white rosebuds. A queer costume we should think it to-day, but one that was the height of fashion and which, we are assured, was extremely becoming to the girl wearer.

At Gravesend the Prince of Wales was waiting, and directly the yacht came to anchor he went on board. The lovers met with the eyes of thousands of spectators upon them, and everyone expected the Prince would give a courtly bow and perhaps would impress a reverential kiss upon his bride's hand. That was the sort of thing expected of lovers in those days.

Albert Edward always did the right thing to win the hearts of the people, and he did it then. When Princess Alexandra held out her hand he took it certainly, but only to draw her to him that he might kiss her lips. It was a human touch, a real lover's greeting, and all the crowd who watched went wild with sympathy and delight.

"Everybody loves a lover," it has been said, and this boyish Prince and his girl-Princess appeared as ideal lovers to the thousands who watched.

Gravesend Pier was gay with orange blossom, and on it stood sixty girls wearing red and white, the Danish national colours, waiting to scatter

rose petals before the feet of the bride. In stately procession the Prince led the Princess down that flower-strewn pier, her parents and their suite following, so they reached the railway station, where a group of Danish ladies were ready to present a welcoming address from the Danes in London.

Waiting the royal party was a gaily-decorated train whose driver was the Earl of Caithness. It might have been thought it would have been better to have had a professional driver at the wheel when such important passengers had to be carried, but the Earl was an enthusiast and seems to have managed the driving excellently—perhaps there was another driver on the footplate.

At the slowest possible speed the train travelled to London and reached what was then the terminus of the South Eastern Railway, the Bricklayers' Arms—an ugly station with an ugly name. To-day the railway crosses the river and has Charing Cross as its terminus, while the Bricklayers' Arms has become a goods yard, not open to passenger traffic. In 1863, however, railways were in their infancy—how young they are, as such things count their age!—so it was this ugly station which welcomed the Princess to London, and there upon its decorated platforms waited the Lord Mayor and the sheriffs in their robes, with the Duke of Cambridge, father of

Princess Mary Adelaide, and many of the foreign royalites who had come to England as wedding guests.

Luncheon was served at the Bricklayers' Arms, then the Princess entered a carriage, where she sat by the side of her princely lover, her father and mother facing them.

The procession was formed, the royalties and the Lord Mayor following, a detachment of the Royal Horse Guards forming a brilliant escort.

London had spent three hundred thousand pounds on the decoration of its streets, and all the populace seemed to have come out to see the bride. It was with greatest difficulty the escort could force a way through the throng on London Bridge; the police were not organised as they are now, and traffic regulations were unheard of. Near the Mansion House the carriage was nearly overturned, so frantic was the rush of people trying to get near the Princess.

Westward they went at a foot's pace, literally fighting their way through the surging, cheering throngs.

Hours after the scheduled time Hyde Park was gained, where the newly formed corps of Volunteers were waiting to demonstrate their loyalty; then, still slowly, still with the Princess bowing from right to left the whole of the way, the carriage crossed the Park and in the end

reached Paddington Station, where the royal train waited.

It would have been better in every way if the marriage could have taken place in London, but that Queen Victoria had forbidden. She would not go to Buckingham Palace, she said, nor lay aside her mourning, therefore the wedding must take place at Windsor.

The short run from Paddington gave a little rest to the Princess, who must have been absolutely exhausted ; and even that rest was small, for at every station people waited to cheer, so she had to show herself at the carriage windows and bow and smile again. When Windsor was reached at last there were eight hundred boys from Eton to give her an address, which they did in the pouring rain.

Carriages were entered once more, there was the very short drive through Windsor town and up the steep approach to the Castle, where Queen Victoria, in the deepest possible mourning, was waiting at the grand entrance surrounded by her children, all dressed in deep black also.

After that the girl bride was allowed to rest for two days, during which she took no part in any public function, and so she came to March 10th, which was her wedding day.

CHAPTER IV

THE ROYAL WEDDING DAY

Queen Victoria as onlooker—The three processions—The wedding dress—The small boy who would not be kept in order—The gift of the bridesmaids—Signing the register—The honeymoon.

THE day of the royal wedding was kept as a holiday all over the kingdom, business of every kind was suspended, and even the beggars in the streets wore wedding favours.

St. George's Chapel is a very stately building, practically part of the Castle, and in its upper part is a recess—it can hardly be called a pew—from which an excellent view of the chancel can be obtained. In this recess Queen Victoria seated herself, still in her deepest of deep mourning, but with the blue ribbon of the Garter across her breast. She would take no other part in the ceremony, she said, but would be present in the chapel as an onlooker.

As soon as Her Majesty had taken her seat in that secluded corner, the first of the wedding processions—there were to be three in all—began to file in stately fashion up the nave. It was the first royal wedding to be celebrated in this

chapel since the wedding of Henry I. seven hundred and forty years before, and every effort had been made to prepare a most magnificent pageant.

First came the procession of guests, headed by a little lady who led a small boy by the hand. That little lady was the bridegroom's elder sister, Princess Royal of Great Britain, who had become Princess Frederick William of Prussia by marriage, and the small child was to be the ex-Kaiser of to-day. In that first procession also came the bridegroom's younger brothers, Prince Alfred (the late Duke of Edinburgh), Prince Arthur (the present Duke of Connaught), and Prince Leopold (the late Duke of Albany), dressed in Highland costume, and with them were the Danish Princes, the brothers of the bride.

The members of the first procession had no sooner taken their places in the chancel than a fanfare of trumpets announced the coming of the bridegroom. Very stately and splendid was his procession. Alone he walked, a youthful figure in the uniform of a British general, his breast blazing with the jewelled collar of the Garter and the splendid order of the Star of India, while from his shoulders flowed the purple mantle of a Knight of the Garter, upheld by pages.

Following, came his uncle, the reigning Duke

of Saxe-Coburg, brother of the late Prince Consort, and his brother-in-law, Frederick William of Prussia, always a splendid figure, and both wearing the collars and mantles of the Garter.

At the altar the Prince took his stand, then, at exactly half-past twelve, the time appointed, another blare of crashing music told the bride had come. The great author Charles Dickens was amongst those in the chapel, and of the girlish bride he wrote :

“ Her face was very pale and full of a sort of awe and wonder, but the face of no ordinary bride . . . not simply a timid, shrinking girl, but one with a character distinctive of her own, prepared to act a great part greatly.”

The Princess leaned lightly on the arm of her father, a remarkably handsome man who was splendid in his jewelled uniform, and the bride looked her loveliest.

Her wedding dress was a wonderful garment, and must have been a considerable weight, since it was of enormous width, ten yards round the hem, and worn over a wide crinoline. White satin was the material, draped with Honiton lace that had been specially woven in Devonshire, the design an intermingling of the rose, the thistle, and the shamrock. The bodice was covered with this lace, and from the bride's

shoulders trailed a long train of great magnificence, made of cloth of silver, edged with tulle and orange blossom. The hair was simply brushed back from her brow, with one long curl of glossy brown falling on either side of her face. Above it gleamed a crown of diamonds, with a wreath of orange blossom, and behind streamed a long lace veil. That crown of diamonds was a wedding present from the Corporation of London, and, in addition, she wore a diamond bracelet from the ladies of Leeds, and a bracelet of opals and diamonds from the ladies of Manchester, yet another diamond and opal bracelet, the gift of Queen Victoria, and the necklace and brooch of diamonds, the gift of the bridegroom.

Her bouquet was of orange blossoms, white roses, and myrtle, in a very beautiful holder that had been given by a Hindu potentate—a piece of barbaric splendour of crystal, diamonds, corals, and emeralds, with a chain of gold and pearls.

It might have been expected that her sisters and those of her bridegroom would have formed her train of attendant maids, but, instead, those Princesses appeared among the guests, and the eight bridesmaids were daughters of British peers—the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Suffolk, the Earl of Hardwicke, the Earl Cowley, the Duke of St. Albans, the Marquis of Abercorn, the Earl of Elgin, and the Earl of Listowel.

By a very charming thought, these bridesmaids presented to the Princess a bracelet formed of eight squares of ivory surrounded by brilliants, and on each of these squares was an exquisitely painted portrait of one of the bridesmaids.

.

The wedding ceremony ended, the Archbishop of Canterbury spoke the Benediction, then the royal pair rose, and, standing hand in hand, bowed towards that recess in the upper story where the Queen was seated, unseen but watching. At the same moment the strains of the wedding hymn thrilled down the stately building, sung by Jenny Lind, the greatest vocalist of all time.

Bishop Wilberforce was amongst the many clergy who assisted at the ceremony, and this is his account of it :

“The wedding was the most moving sight I ever saw, the Queen above, looking down, adding such a wonderful note of deep feeling through all the lighter notes of joyousness and show. The Princess of Wales, calm, feeling self-possessed ; the Prince with more depth of manner than ever before. The entrance of Princess Mary of Cambridge was grand. The little Prince William of Prussia was close

between his two uncles to keep him quiet, both of whom he beat on their bare Highland legs whenever they tried to keep him in order."

That account is very wonderful in the characters which can be read from it. "The Princess of Wales, calm, feeling self-possessed; the Prince with more depth of manner than ever before." Was ever a better description of boy and girl bride and bridegroom standing at the threshold of their new life together? "The entrance of the Princess Mary of Cambridge was grand." And then there comes a touch of comedy, the little Prince William of Prussia, the naughty boy, beating—another account says biting—the Highland legs of his uncles.

.

Ordinary folk go from the altar to the vestry to sign the register, but this was not the procedure in the case of the royal wedding. With the strains of the wedding hymn pealing through the church, a new procession had been formed, and, with the bride and bridegroom leading, all went back to the Castle, where Queen Victoria was awaiting them in the Green Drawing-room.

It was there the register was signed.

Afterwards the whole party adjourned to St. George's Hall, where a stately feast was laid, the tables glittering with the celebrated gold plate

which is used only on very special state occasions, and in the midst towered the wedding cake, a marvel of sugar icing, six feet high.

Queen Victoria would not go to the hall, she remained in the Castle, and the shadow of her grief followed to the wedding breakfast. There were hardly any speeches, out of deference to her deep mourning, though in the 'sixties a wedding breakfast was a very long-drawn-out affair as a rule, and speeches were expected to occupy a considerable time.

Probably the bride and bridegroom were not sorry for the omission. At four o'clock they left Windsor for Osborne, where they spent their honeymoon, though even that journey must have been an ordeal, as there were more ovations and receptions at every possible point.

At Reading, for instance, where the train stopped, thirty thousand people had gathered to present a bouquet to the bride. Much the same thing happened at Portsmouth, while great guns from the warships in the Channel thundered their salute as the royal yacht carried bride and bridegroom across the Solent to begin their all-too-brief honeymoon.

CHAPTER V

ROYAL HOMES

Marlborough House—Its building by the great Duchess—De Foe's account of it—How it came to the nation—The Prince's bachelor home—The home of our present Prince of Wales—State apartments—The drawing-room—The garden—Sandringham—Heather and pines and lilies—The great hall—The dining- and drawing-rooms—The historic avenue—The gardens—The diary—Buckingham Palace—The mulberry gardens—The Duke of Buckingham—The Queen's House—Strange visitors to the palace—Windsor Castle—Balmoral—Osborne House.

THE Isle of Wight honeymoon lasted nine days, then back the young couple went to Windsor for a short time, though soon they were plunged into the whirl of one of the gayest seasons London has ever known.

It was necessary they should take possession of their own home, for in those days, and long afterwards, Buckingham Palace was a mansion of shadows, its blinds drawn, its furniture shrouded in holland. Because it had been the chief home of Queen Victoria and her consort, the Queen had ordered that in consequence of his death it must be a house of mourning, and

in her widowhood she divided her time between Windsor Castle, Osborne, and Balmoral.

On the rare occasions when Her Majesty commanded those very uncomfortable functions which were called "drawing-rooms" to be held, the front blinds of Buckingham Palace were pulled up for an hour or two, and a few of the state apartments were set in order. The rest of the Palace was left to its dreary gloom, all other Court functions, levees and so forth, being held at the Palace of St. James across the park.

Thus it was important the young Prince and Princess should have homes of their own of dignity and splendour, and so far it was fortunate that the Prince owned Marlborough House already.

Marlborough House is one of the historic mansions of London. It was built by the great Duke of Marlborough, or, rather, by his domineering wife, Sarah Jennings, the friend—and tyrant—of poor, stupid Queen Anne. The duchess, deciding she must have a London home, obtained from the Queen a grant of land in St. James's Park, "heretofore used for keeping pheasants and guinea hens and other fowl," and rumour went that Queen Anne not only gave the land, but defrayed a large portion of the cost of building the house—a rumour the duchess strenuously denied.

Whoever paid the cost, the house was a splendid mansion, designed by Christopher Wren, and Daniel De Foe, in his *A Journey through England*, wrote a description of it as it was in the early part of the eighteenth century. He says :

“Marlborough House, the palace of the Duke of Marlborough, is in every way answerable to the grandeur of its master. The situation is more confined than that of the Duke of Buckinghamshire; but the body of the house is much nobler, more compact, and the apartments better disposed. It is situated at the West End of the King’s Garden on the Park side, and fronts the Park, but with no other prospect but the view. Its court is very spacious and finely paved, the Offices are large, and on each side, as you enter, the stairs mounting to the gate are very noble; and in the Vestibule, as you enter, are finely painted the Battles of Hockstet and Blenheim with the taking of Marshal Tallard prisoner.”

The mansion “of the Duke of Buckinghamshire” is now Buckingham Palace, whose story will be told later.

.

Both the great Duke of Marlborough and his

duchess died in Marlborough House, and it remained as the London mansion of the Marlborough family until 1817—very nearly a hundred years after that visit of De Foe. At that time it was in the market, so was purchased, out of public funds, to be the home of that little Princess Charlotte whose widower husband became the match-making King of the Belgians. The Princess died before the purchase was completed, but her husband made it his home for a time, then, when he left England to take up the responsibilities of his Belgian throne, the mansion was granted to Queen Adelaide, widow of William IV., till her death (1849), after which it remained empty till it was bought to be the home of the Prince of Wales.

He was quite a lad when he set up his separate establishment there, for times were different from these democratic days, and the comparatively modest establishment of a flat in St. James's Palace, which is thought sufficient for our Prince of Wales, would have been considered quite inadequate for his grandfather, who was given this mansion of the Marlboroughs, with an enormous retinue.

Remembering the state kept at Marlborough House as a bachelor establishment, it may be of interest to describe the home of our Prince of Wales in St. James's Palace. In a book on His Royal Highness, written recently by Miss

G. Ivy Sanders, is the following account of his home, here somewhat abridged :

“ Opening on to Ambassadors’ Court (St. James’s Palace), York House adjoins the picturesque gateway which is part of what little remains of the original palace. . . . It is said to be one of the quietest houses in London, and certainly it is one of the most simple. Above all, it is a man’s house, the home of a man’s man.

“ The rooms which the Prince occupies are the same in which his father and mother, as Duke and Duchess of York, lived for some time during his childhood.

“ The two beautiful but quietly furnished reception-rooms adjoining the simple dining-room on the ground floor are now devoted almost entirely to his secretariat. The plain, square entrance-hall contains some interesting trophies of his active service, including the bass drum and two side drums of his regiment and two bugles used by the Grenadier Guards in France. Some fine, old English tapestries relieve the bareness of the wide, white-panelled staircase.

“ The Prince’s own apartments, overlooking Cleveland Row, are extremely modest and business-like, and consist of two lofty, formal reception-rooms and his own small sitting-room. The latter is simply but comfortably

furnished . . . a restful green is the dominating colour of the carpet, upholstery, and heavy damask curtains. . . . An exquisite painting of his mother, Queen Mary, occupies a prominent position . . . conspicuous amongst his photographs are those of his only sister, Princess Mary. . . . It is characteristic of the Prince that he sleeps in the little dressing-room off the spacious bedroom which he should properly occupy."

That quotation is a digression, but the digression may be forgiven, so great an interest lies in comparing those days of our grandparents and great-grandparents with the times we know.

.

At Marlborough House, Alexandra, Princess of Wales, made her London home from the day when she first came to England as a girlish bride, and many have been the splendid functions those walls have seen under her gracious care. Naturally it is a palace of the highest importance—although modestly called a "house"—and contains well over a hundred rooms, but, in spite of that, it has proved too small for the requirements of the royal family and their guests on many occasions.

The state apartments are on the ground floor, and there also are the family living-rooms, which

are very different from the state apartments. For instance, the great dining-room is nearly sixty feet in length, and has no less than seven windows, a magnificent setting for a state banquet, but not a place in which a small party could enjoy a comfortable meal.

Evidently this has been realised, for the ordinary dining-room is very much smaller and decidedly more cosy. By the way, on state occasions, when the banqueting-hall was used, the Prince and Princess did not sit at the head and foot of the table respectively, as ordinary host and hostess do; they faced each other, it is true, but it was from the middle of the sides of the table.

The state drawing-room is a wonderful apartment, all white and gold, with touches of pink, and in it are two grand pianos side by side, an arrangement made in the later days, because the Princess and her daughters played duets on separate instruments, as piano duets should be played.

When the Princess was in residence her private apartments were fragrant with her favourite flowers, lilies of the valley. These used to be specially grown in the hot-houses at Sandringham, so that they were in bloom all the year round, and baskets were packed daily and sent to London to beautify her town house.

As has been said, the garden of Marlborough

House is small—it cannot well be anything else in the midst of London—but it is delightfully secluded behind high walls, and contains a few old trees of stately beauty. In one corner of the garden is a little cemetery for dogs, where old favourites lie, and in another corner is what used to be the playground of the royal children.

.

The other house that was provided for the young royal couple was Sandringham, and when the Princess saw it first it was a very unpretentious building, standing on an open common.

When a country home was decided upon for the Prince of Wales—to be bought out of his own private fortune, since there was a surplus in hand from the revenues of the estates of the Duchy of Cornwall, thanks to the wise and prudent management of the Prince Consort—all England was searched for a suitable mansion, and it was generally agreed that Newstead Abbey, then in the market, was the one on which the royal choice would fall.

Newstead was a comparatively modern building, standing on the site of the ancient abbey, whose ruins had been incorporated with the present mansion. It was in the very heart of England, thus, was easily accessible by train, yet sufficiently secluded; and, according to

rumour, the young Prince of Wales was delighted with it.

Unfortunately, however, Newstead had been the home of Lord Byron, and Queen Victoria, with truly Victorian prejudice, disliked Byron, his poetry, and all his works. Therefore she refused to allow her son to purchase Newstead, and after much further search it was determined to buy Sandringham Hall, a small and very lonely house, whose site was described thus by a lady whose home was on the estate :

“ . . . a most attractive place, a little bit of Scotland, with heather and pines dropped down upon the Norfolk marshes and flats . . . more picturesque in those days and suggestive of the old race of squires who had held it from time to time, than at the present when extensive building has given it a suburban air.”

Though heather and pine were the chief features of the landscape, not far away lay the remains of a once widespread and stately forest, and there, under the giant trees, spread masses of lilies of the valley. It was of these lilies that bulbs were removed to the Sandringham glass-houses that Marlborough House might be made fragrant and the Princess be surrounded by her favourite flowers all the year round.

.

When Princess Alexandra first saw Sandringham House she fell in love with it there and then, and from that time onward she and her husband united in plans for its beautification.

As their family grew larger, Sandringham became too small, and again there came the suggestion that another mansion should be bought, but the Prince and Princess declared this home was too well loved for them to leave it, and in the end it was decided to build a new house near the old one, after plans that were personally superintended by the royal couple.

This newer house is the Sandringham we know to-day, a large mansion showing signs of solid comfort, built in the style called Elizabethan, a park surrounding it, and, close at hand, a series of gardens with stately terraces and elaborate carpet flower-beds.

Inside, one of the main features is the great hall with its ceiling of oaken beams and walls of the same rich wood. That hall makes the chief sitting-room, and on its walls were paintings of the Yellow Palace at Copenhagen and of the Danish holiday-home at Bernstorff, pictures which were brought from her girlish home by the Princess and were kept before her constantly in tender memory of the old days.

Also there were portraits of her father and mother and her sisters and favourite brother.

The dining-room at Sandringham is panelled

in oak, and, in the days when the Princess made it her home, one of its chief pieces of furniture was a buffet laden with the gold and silver trophies the Prince of Wales had won yachting and racing.

In the drawing-room the chief impression the visitor received was of an enormous amount of glittering glass. The chandeliers were of the lustre type; there were long mirrors fitted into the panelled walls; and tall cabinets, containing rare cut glass, had shelves of mirrors.

There are three drawing-rooms in all, these being decorated in the palest tints of blue and pink and cream with burnished gold on the woodwork, and all three rooms look to the west, so they gain the afternoon sun, the time when drawing-rooms are most likely to be used.

From the chief drawing-room opens a conservatory, a real winter-garden where tea was often served amid tropical plants.

The Princess of Wales used to be particularly fond of a large morning-room on the ground floor on the east side, a room that caught the early morning sun. There she would spend a great deal of her time, and discuss her correspondence with her secretary. Her boudoir was on the first floor; near it was her dressing-room.

In the grounds of Sandringham is an avenue of trees, each bearing a label to tell how it was

planted by some one of the many crowned heads or great personages who have visited the house, and, as can be imagined, to be asked to plant a tree in this avenue is a very high honour indeed.

Of gardens there are many kinds at Sandringham, and in the laying out of all, the Princess of Wales took an intelligent personal interest, for she was enthusiastic in her love of flowers. The carpet beds have been mentioned already, but, in contrast to their formal brilliance, are smooth, green lawns surrounded by clumps of flowering shrubs, and the wildness of what is known as the Alpine garden, where rock-plants grow in untrained profusion over mossy stones and a cascade comes tumbling from a rocky height.

Another of the interesting sights of Sandringham is the stables. They are so beautifully kept, and there can be seen Queen Alexandra's horses and ponies, but indeed she had all sorts of pets including many dogs. Among the latter are several borzois. It is through her interest that this curious breed was first introduced into England and became popular.

The dairy is another of the special features of Sandringham in which Her Royal Highness took a great interest, for here she often would have tea served. Also she introduced the Danish way of making butter, and the whole building was lined with Oriental tiles which were brought

to her from India by the Prince. Really that dairy is a house built in Swiss cottage style, having many rooms, where all the butter-making equipments are of silver, lined with porcelain.

When tea was served there, it was with a special tea-service presented by Queen Victoria to her daughter-in-law, each piece painted with a different view of the Scottish Highlands.

Many festivities have been given at Sandringham, and amongst these not the least have been the tenant balls, which the Prince and Princess invariably attended. As was the fashion in her younger days, the Princess gave up waltzing after she married, and contented herself with quadrilles and other square dances, and these she enjoyed to the full. Skating, too, was one of her accomplishments, and in the winter, when the lake was frozen, carnivals would be given on the ice by light of many lamps, and very delightful festivals these would be.

Apart from all else, Sandringham was a real home; probably it is there that the happiest hours of the Princess's married life were spent. Every brick of the great house has some happy memory, and in old-world style you see over the great front door a carved stone with the legend :

“This house was built by Albert Edward,
Prince of Wales, and Alexandra his wife, in

the year of Our Lord, Eighteen Hundred and Seventy.”

.

While on the subject of royal residences, brief mention may be made of those occupied by Queen Victoria, which descended to her son on his accession.

Buckingham Palace was one of the royal residences which knew many changes when King Edward ascended the throne. Unlike Windsor, it is not an historic building from the point of age, the present palace dating only from the year 1825. The ground on which it stands has been celebrated, from one reason and another, for a much, much longer time, however.

It was in the reign of James I. that a certain plot of land was purchased and planted with mulberry trees, the idea being to grow mulberries for the feeding of silkworms in the hope that silk production might become a British industry. The plan failed, and the mulberry orchard was sold to a syndicate who named it the Mulberry Gardens and started a place of popular alfresco entertainment, forerunner of the more famous Vauxhall, but again success was lacking. In the first years of the eighteenth century the gardens were bought by the then Duke of Buckingham, who built a mansion for his own use, naming it Buckingham House—the house De Foe compared to that of Marlborough.

In 1762 it was purchased by the Crown as a residence for the Queen Consort, who up till then had had Somerset House as her official home. That being ruinous, it was decided to rebuild it as Government offices and to give Her Majesty new quarters in the ducal home. Henceforward the mansion was called the Queen's House, and old Queen Charlotte, wife of George III. took up her residence there. George IV., finding St. James's Palace far too small for the needs of the times, decided to change the Queen's House into Buckingham Palace, and employed the famous architect Nash to "convert" the place, which practically means he rebuilt it.

Half a million of money was spent on the work, which was unfinished when George IV. died, and his brother, William IV., ascending the throne, made it known he did not like the new royal residence, so would have none of it.

Queen Victoria did not share his prejudice, and within a month of her accession she moved from her quarters in Kensington Palace to take up her residence in Buckingham Palace, which became the official London home of our British monarch from that time.

It is on record that the Palace proved anything but comfortable to live in in those early days, chiefly because there was so much red tape in its arrangements and each department concerned was envious of the rest. For instance,

we are gravely told that many of the rooms were improperly warmed, and the young Queen was often left shivering for hours, because it was the duty of the Lord Steward's department to lay the fires, but that of the Lord Chamberlain's to light them. If the two sets of servants happened to be at loggerheads—as was the case generally, it would seem—the fires were either laid but not lighted, or the servants who came to light them found they were not laid !

Prince Albert, with his sound common sense and power of organisation, brought better regulations to bear, and during Queen Victoria's married life the Palace saw many brilliant gatherings.

Queen Victoria used St. James's Palace for practically all her "drawing-rooms," but in 1868—doubtless at the suggestion of the Princess of Wales, who was deputising for Her Majesty on all such occasions—"drawing-rooms" were ordered to be held in the Throne Room of Buckingham Palace, though levees (the functions at which gentlemen were presented to the Prince in his mother's place) continued to be held at St. James's.

It may be told here that, with the accession of King Edward, Buckingham Palace entered on a new era. The dull "drawing-rooms" were abolished, glittering Courts were substituted, and these Courts were held—they are held still—in the ballroom, which was entirely redecorated.

It was found that the Palace was hopelessly behind the times in the matter of what we call every-day convenience. The kitchens were obsolete in their appointments, and not a single lift had been installed. All the food had to be carried from kitchen to private dining-room or to state banqueting-hall, along almost endless corridors and up and down innumerable stairs. It can be imagined the difficulty servants had to face in keeping the dishes even reasonably warm.

All that was altered; then, in the present reign, the Palace was refronted to give the appearance we know to-day. It was at Buckingham Palace King Edward died on May 6th, 1910. He was the first monarch to pass away within those walls, as Queen Victoria died at Osborne, and the Prince Consort at Windsor.

One strange coincidence which reflects a good deal on the builders of the Palace must be mentioned, though it has no direct connection with Queen Alexandra. In the early days of Queen Victoria's married life there was a great stir in the Palace, caused by the discovery of a perfectly strange boy, a lad named Jones, hiding in one of the rooms. He was quite ready to explain how he had wandered there. Apparently he had walked in and no one had troubled to ask his business for a long time. Indeed, he

claimed to have hidden in the private apartments and to have overheard a conversation between Queen Victoria and her husband.

He was not punished, but orders went forth and regulations were made to prevent the recurrence of such an incident, which at the best was awkward, and might have been dangerous, yet, within the last dozen years, history repeated itself, and in 1914 a strange man was found walking about in the private apartments of Queen Mary.

He proved to be a perfectly respectable workman, and told how he had been sitting in a public-house when he heard two other men talking in the next compartment. They had said anyone could get right into the heart of Buckingham Palace through a ventilation pipe which opened into the park.

In the spirit of adventure he determined to try, and—had succeeded.

There was no question of his not being honest; indeed, there was a suggestion that he had been actuated by the purest patriotism, and had determined to prove the possible danger which might await the King and Queen through that opening. He felt that if he made such a statement to the servants—at least to such underlings as those with whom he could come in contact—he would be laughed at for his pains and his warning unheeded. Therefore he made up his



Photo Prints

THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER CHILDREN

Princess Mary
(Queen of Norway)

Princess Louise
(The Princess Royal)

Prince George
(His Majesty King George V)

Princess Victoria
Prince Albert Victor
(The Late Duke of
Clarence)

mind to take the risk and to prove what could be done.

Of course he was arrested and brought before the magistrate, but King George made a special request he should not be punished, so free he went, and was rather a hero for a time, as he deserved to be if his story were true. And there is no reason to disbelieve it.

.

Of Windsor Castle no detailed mention may be made here—it has been the historic home of our kings and queens since Henry I. built his castle on the height above the river, moving his Court there from the palace of “old Windsor” down in the hollow, which had been the stronghold of the Saxon kings.

.

It is an open secret that of all her royal homes Queen Victoria loved most that at Balmoral, the stately castle in Braemar, Aberdeenshire, nine miles from Ballater Town. When she and Prince Albert first visited the Highlands they fell in love with an old castle amongst the mountains, overlooking the lovely valley of the winding Dee, and in 1848 Prince Albert set about purchasing the estate from the Fife trustees, who owned it.

At once it was seen that the castle was not sufficiently commodious for a royal residence,

so the present castle was built, the Prince personally supervising the details and passing the plans. Perhaps herein lies the reason for the pathetic love his Queen gave the place after his death.

When she died, Balmoral was given to the nation, to become the official Highland home of the reigning monarch, but so long as Queen Victoria lived it was her personal property, and during their visits to the Highlands the young Prince and Princess of Wales lived at Abergeldy Castle, a far smaller residence a few miles away.

Osborne House, in the Isle of Wight, was another of the homes built under the personal care of Prince Albert, the house being raised on the site of a mansion owned by a Mr. Lambert, and coming into the market at his death. The present building was completed in 1845, and remained a beloved home of Queen Victoria until her death, which occurred within its walls.

On his accession King Edward declared he and his Queen loved their own home at Sandringham so well they wanted no other country house. In consequence he made Osborne a gift to the nation—it was his private property—on which it became a college for the training of naval cadets, but is now a convalescent home for naval and military officers.

CHAPTER VI

YOUNG WIFE AND MOTHER

A reception at St. James's—The gloom of "drawing-rooms"—The first "drawing-room" the Princess held—When George IV. was King—Uncrowned King and Queen—A ball at Guildhall—Why Prince William changed his name—The tradition of the warming-pan—The Princess goes skating—The birth of the royal heir—Doctors and nurses who came too late—"It"—The Christening of the Prince.

It was at an early reception held at St. James's Palace that Alexandra, Princess of Wales, made her first state appearance in London. A well-known peeress who was present wrote her impressions of the royal bride thus :

"At the reception I saw the graceful, charming young Princess and she in no way disappointed me ; there was something charming in that very young pair walking up the room together. Her graceful bows and courage you will delight in, and she has, with lovely youth and well-formed features, a look of great intelligence beyond that of a merely pretty girl. She wore her coronet of diamonds and a very long-trained gown of the cloth of

silver trimmed with lace, and two love-locks of rich brown hair floated over her shoulders."

Being in deep mourning Queen Victoria decided she could not hold any "drawing-rooms," so the girl Princess had to take her place in these functions. As a matter of fact the Princess presided over them for very nearly forty years, and surely she must have hated them with all her soul. At least we know when her husband came to the throne, one of her first acts was to sweep away the institution and to substitute the present evening Courts in their stead.

"Drawing-rooms" were held in the afternoon. Fancy getting into the pronounced evening dresses of the period at about two o'clock in the day, which was what the ladies of the court had to do; and Queen Victoria insisted that the bodices of all who appeared must be kept at the lowest possible line, that all shoulders must be bare, with not even a shoulder strap, so it was a miracle how those very *décolleté* bodices kept in position at all; also it was imperative that the court dress must include a train of six yards in length, with an upstanding plume of ostrich feathers in the hair.

For weeks before she made her *début* a society girl had to take special lessons in the art of walking backwards while pushing her train with her foot.

In that evening dress the *débutante* or lady of the Court had to drive in the grey of a London day to the palace, and there was taken through shrouded corridors to an ante-room where there was never any fire, and, the whole palace being practically unused excepting for a few odd days in the year, the atmosphere struck chill and cold.

No refreshments were offered, hardly any conversation was allowed, the ladies simply stood and shivered till the signal came for one or other to enter the royal presence.

Then the lady chosen went forward, grooms of the chamber arranging her train behind her with long staffs. She entered the room where the Queen or her representative was seated in a gilded chair; reaching that chair the lady curtsied low and kissed the royal hand. Sometimes a word or two was said by the royal lady—when the Princess of Wales was representing the queen those words were very sweet and gracious and to the point, for Alexandra was always tactful—but in many cases not even a syllable was uttered.

The kiss given, the *débutante*, walking backwards and managing her six yards of train, crossed the long room to a door opposite that by which she had entered, and all was over. She was free to get into her waiting carriage and hurry home to bed if she were very cold, though as a rule those who had been presented went to visit friends to show themselves in their court

dress, and often visited court photographers as well.

By half-past three or four the affair was over, everyone very tired, very cold, very hungry, and bored to tears.

Fancy a beautiful, high-spirited, pleasure-loving girl such as Alexandra being obliged to preside over such a very stodgy ceremonial!

It is to her credit that she did it without shirking and was the brightest spot those dreary "drawing-rooms" had ever known.

.
Incidentally it may be mentioned that when George IV. was King he held "drawing-rooms" in person, and they seem to have been much the same depressing functions as those Queen Victoria knew, with one rather startling exception. Whereas in Victorian days the lady presented to the monarch merely curtsied and kissed the royal hand, when the King was on the throne he made a point of personally kissing the face of each lady presented to him.

The *Observer* of a hundred years ago mentioned the manner in which the royal kisses were bestowed, and recently the paragraph was reprinted in the *Observer* of to-day. It is a delightful specimen of early nineteenth-century journalism, far too good not to be quoted here :

"HIS MAJESTY'S 'DRAWING-ROOM.'—The long-deferred 'drawing-room' was held on

Thursday with the customary splendour, but it was by no means so numerously attended as on former occasions. . . . His Majesty was in excellent health and spirits, and did not fail to kiss the fair blossoms of beauty as they were presented. It was amusing to watch the degrees of fervour with which His Majesty performed this agreeable ceremony. There was the kiss *direct*, the kiss *oblique*, and the kiss *en passant*. The antiquated damsels were forced to be content with the *whisker* kiss, their cheeks being merely brushed by that luxuriant appendage to His Majesty's countenance."

As has been said, at ordinary times the "drawing-room" began at two and finished at half-past three, but the first "drawing-room" the Princess ever held was an exception. In this case no less than two thousand ladies were present, and the crush was so great and so badly managed that it took some of them three hours to get into her presence—crushing and struggling in a manner that must have been much after the fashion of a modern bargain-sale crowd—and three hours to get away from the throne-room to the carriages.

Many ladies were fainting from exhaustion at the end of the six hours, but not so much as a cup of tea or coffee could be had within the palace.

Yet every one of those ladies came away declaring it was worth the ordeal, so enthusiastic were they over their young Princess.

As Prince and Princess of Wales in title, as uncrowned King and Queen in fact, the position of the young couple was enormously difficult but they filled it to perfection. Each was royal, each was gracious, each had that magic gift of charm, each flung all energies into the duties laid upon them.

For forty years they lived as uncrowned King and Queen, always in the glare of the lime-light, entertaining foreign potentates, keeping peace amid the widespread families of royalties whose destinies were intertwined with those of their many peoples, leading the trend of the nation's thoughts.

.
It was during that first season of the young Princess of Wales in London that an incident occurred which showed how dear she held the home of her girlhood still.

A ball was given at the Guildhall by the Lord Mayor and the Aldermen, and the Prince and Princess of Wales were the guests of honour.

All was gaiety and dancing, when suddenly lights were lowered and a hush fell on the assembly.

Everyone wondered what was to happen, for the secret had been kept well. Suddenly

from a hidden corner the rays of a magic lantern shot forth to fall on to a white screen, and there was revealed a picture of the seaside home at Bernstorff with the Princess Alexandra and her sisters on the lawn—a bevy of girls very simply dressed.

The Princess, who was practically the first lady in our land, the girl ablaze with jewels in whose honour this great gathering had been held, looked at the picture of her other self and nearly broke down.

Tears sprang to her eyes, her voice trembled, as she turned to the Lord Mayor and thanked him.

.

The young Princess of Wales kept up constant correspondence with her home, and in that summer important news reached her concerning her younger brother, Prince William, whom she loved best of all.

In those days Greece had not very long been free from Turkish rule, and was in a state of chaos and wanting a king to govern it.

First the crown had been offered to Otho of Bavaria and he had accepted, only to prove so extremely unsatisfactory that he had returned to his own country, so the Greeks were without a monarch again. After much discussion they decided on Prince Alfred of Great Britain, the younger brother of the Prince of Wales, offering him their crown with great enthusiasm; indeed

they actually elected him King and held rejoicings in his honour, when to their surprise it was discovered there were difficulties in the way. As his uncle had no children it was a foregone conclusion that he would inherit Saxe-Coburg-Gotha by right of his father, and he could hardly rule there and in Greece as well. On which Alexander II., the Tsar of Russia, who was taking a great interest in Denmark and also was the most important power in Grecian affairs, suggested the crown should be offered to Prince William.

The offer was accepted, and here in England the Princess of Wales learnt that her young brother had gone to Athens to be crowned, and how by way of compliment to the people who had accepted him as their ruler he had changed his name from William to George. Thus it was as George I. he ascended the throne of Greece.

Loving him as the Princess of Wales did, his elevation must have caused much anxiety. There were many factions in that unsettled country and many were hostile to their new ruler; yet however much she suffered she gave no sign, always moving in the front ranks of the most brilliant Society with laughter in her eyes and kindly words on her lips.

.

In the late autumn came news from Denmark that was exciting, though grave as well. The King was dead and the father of the Princess of

Wales ascended the throne as King Christian IX.

Unfortunately he came into power at a period of great anxiety. Prussia was making trouble ; talk of war disturbed Europe. Though peace had not been actually broken there was trouble and anxiety on all sides, and all weighed very heavily upon the young wife.

Towards the end of that year, after a visit to the Highlands, she and her husband came South again, the Princess practically in retirement, for an heir to the throne was expected to be born in the following March and no care was too great to be lavished upon the expectant young mother.

Christmas was to be spent quietly at Windsor—everything was quiet there where the shadow of mourning hung so heavily—and in February it was arranged Her Royal Highness should go to Marlborough House for her confinement. She wished to have her baby born in Sandringham, her own dear home, but that was impossible, Sandringham lying so long a train journey away from the metropolis.

Ever since that absurd tradition went abroad that our last King James smuggled a baby boy into his wife's compartment in a warming-pan, there has been a law that, when any child in direct line to the crown is to be born, the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Prime Minister, and the Lord Chamberlain must be actually present in the room at the time of birth—an arrangement

which must be awkward from many points of view, to say the least. Yet that rule was observed up till the birth of Queen Victoria's second child, after that it was settled the dignitaries should be summoned to the palace and given a room close to, but not in, the royal chamber, and that the doctors should bring the baby to them practically a moment after its birth.

In many of the European countries, notably in Spain, similar customs to the original are in existence still, and in spite of the modifications, it was—and is—considered necessary that the leaders of the realm should be in attendance at a royal birth.

Thus it was out of the question that the expected baby should be born far from the metropolis, and Marlborough House was in commotion in preparation for the great event, while the papers of that day began to give details of the layette which had been prepared.

The gloom of Windsor being so overpowering the young Prince and Princess set up their establishment at Frogmore House, the mansion in Windsor Royal Park where Queen Victoria had spent her girlhood and where in these days she lies buried in the mausoleum.

Frogmore was more cheerful than Windsor, though perhaps not much; still the young couple spent their Christmas there as comfortably as could be expected.

January came in with a hard frost and the lake known as Virginia Water was frozen over. The Princess, being an expert skater, had said something to the effect that she longed to be on the ice, but the suggestion brought a chorus of protest from those in attendance, with the result that the high-spirited girl declared she should do as she liked and would put on the skates for half an hour.

There was no one who could say her nay, so there in the grey of that January afternoon she went skimming over the ice, laughing and care-free as she had been in her own home. Suddenly something went wrong, probably she became faint, but to their horror her attendants saw her fall.

Rushing to her aid, they lifted her gently and carried her back to Frogmore, where it became evident she was very ill. Telephones were unknown—the exact date was January 8th, 1864—and even the telegraph had not been installed at Frogmore, so only by sending mounted messengers could the news be spread.

In post-haste an equerry galloped to Windsor, where a special train rushed to London with what we should call an S.O.S. to the Archbishop, the Premier and the Lord Chamberlain, not to mention the physicians and the number of nurses who were at Marlborough House already.

Meanwhile the Princess was very ill, no trained nurse was present and the only doctor to be

obtained on the spur of the moment was a Doctor Brown, of Windsor, a well-known local physician of extremely high standing, but not one with a court practice.

Fortunately, among the ladies in attendance was Lady Macclesfield, a very sensible, level-headed lady, the mother of a large family, and she acted as monthly nurse on the occasion.

Thus the baby boy who was heir to the throne came into the world with his birth unwitnessed by any of the important personages who ought to have been present to represent the nation, and though Marlborough House was crowded with his layette, there was nothing of the sort to hand at Frogmore. The story goes that Lady Macclesfield slipped off her flannel petticoat—a garment every woman wore in those days—in order to wrap him in it.

Lord Granville, a member of the Cabinet, happened to be dining at Frogmore, and to him the child was presented by Lady Macclesfield, still wrapped in that historic flannel petticoat.

The very unexpected birth took place at nine at night, and an hour later a special train steamed into Windsor station bearing four doctors and two nurses, with trunks full of baby garments.

The news that the royal heir had been born two months before he was expected caused consternation, and the entire nation seemed to make up its mind to face another royal tragedy.

But the cloud passed, the daily bulletins said quite truthfully that mother and child were doing well, and there is a very human touch in a letter the young mother wrote to her home at Copenhagen soon after her baby's birth.

“He is the dearest thing [she wrote], and it does annoy me when people call him ‘it.’”

On March 10th, 1864, the first anniversary of the royal wedding day, the baby Prince was christened. The ceremony took place at the private chapel in Buckingham Palace, and Queen Victoria was so pleased that she actually consented to enter the gloomy place on that occasion. She was to be godmother and to even hand the Prince to the officiating bishop.

Lady Macclesfield was there also, carrying the baby to the font, where she gave him to the Queen. Whether he cried during the ceremony or not is not told; probably he did, but the accounts of the affair tell us that the two-months-old mite wore a robe of Honiton lace in which his father had been christened, and that over it he had a royal cloak of purple velvet and ermine!

The names bestowed upon him were Albert Victor Christian Edward; but from first to last in his own family he was Eddie, just as his father was Bertie and his mother Alix.

CHAPTER VII

DAYS DARK AND SUNNY

That old battle of Heligoland—Unwelcome visitors—A Scottish holiday and the heir of an earl—Birth of the second son—Marriage of Princess Mary Adelaide—Darby and Joan—Marriage of Princess Helena—Alliances on the Continent—How Princess Dagmar became the Empress Marie—The birth of the Princess Louise—"The Alexandra Limp"—The doves of Irish peace—Birth of Princess Victoria—A Continental tour—The three most lovely women—A holiday in Egypt—Sight-seeing at Cairo—Electric light at Karnak—The wonders of Constantinople—"Mr. and Mrs. Williams"—The graves in the Crimea—The visit to Greece—The birth of Princess Maud.

DECEMBER and January 1863-4, when the Princess had been at Frogmore, had been a time of cruel suffering and anxiety to her, though very few of the English people realised the fact. Her love for her own land had been mentioned many times, and in that December the war between Denmark and Prussia, which had been threatened when King Christian ascended the throne, broke out.

Imagine what the Princess must have suffered, knowing that her father and brothers, whom

she idolised, were fighting an overwhelming force, that the country which was so dear to her, so closely entwined with the fortunes of her family, was in deadly danger.

Blacker became the news, and there is a story that one day, when the Prince and Princess were at breakfast, an official of the court rushed into the room with the news of a great Danish defeat.

The Princess broke down altogether, and sobbing, "Oh my country, my poor country," she had to be taken to her room.

Reading the records of that little war it is strange to come across the mention of a battle of Heligoland at which the Prussians were defeated and to find how history repeats itself. Unfortunately for our Princess the Prussian defeats were few, and in the end gallant little Denmark, who had made the most splendid fight, had to own herself beaten, and as the price of peace, was obliged to surrender the provinces of Schleswig and Holstein, which thereupon became German.

As is usual in such cases the conquerers forbade the national language to be spoken and tried their hardest to Germanise their new possessions.

How bitterly this was opposed by the nation is proved by the fact that up to the present day—when Schleswig is Danish once more—the country people have always made a point of telling

strangers that they do not understand German ; they speak Danish alone.

In the year of the annexation the British Princess Royal and her husband, Prince William of Prussia, visited Great Britain, and family trouble ensued ; for naturally the young Princess of Wales objected to greet as friends and relatives the conquerors of her beloved land. She was obliged to give way and did it with her usual grace, though to do so must have gone sorely against the grain.

Schleswig-Holstein was the chief topic of conversation in those days, but Queen Victoria—with great tact—gave orders it was not to be mentioned in the hearing of the Princess of Wales.

To outward seeming that royal visit passed off smoothly, but there must have been many awkward moments which it needed all the tact and training of the royal ladies to smooth away, and there was much “skating over thin ice.” It is certain that however she hid her feelings in public, the Princess of Wales could not and did not try to conceal the just resentment she felt when the “fierce light which beats upon a throne” was turned away for the moment.

Altogether the visit of the Prussian Prince and Princess could not have been a pleasant one, and everyone about the British Court breathed more freely when it was ended.

While the Princess of Wales was torn with anxiety concerning the affairs of her dear home, she returned to Scotland for a short holiday and there she made a closer acquaintance of the Earl and Countess of Fife and met their son, a schoolboy by whom she was greatly attracted and in whom she took a special interest ever after. Her affection for that lad increased as time went on, and a warm friendship sprang up between him and her husband, though the Prince of Wales was a good deal the older of the two. From that friendship a very popular royal wedding was to come in after-years.

From Scotland the royal pair went to Denmark, the first time the Prince of Wales had ever been in that country.

Peace had been declared by then and the Danish nation set itself to welcome back the Princess who had lived her girlhood in its midst and now returned to her old home, a fair young wife and mother.

As was the case always wherever he went, the Prince of Wales made himself extremely popular, and we can be sure that the Prince Eddie came in for a great deal of worship from his grandparents and his girlish aunts.

From Denmark the young couple made a flying visit to Sweden, where they made the acquaintance of pretty Princess Louise, destined to be the bride of Prince Frederick, the eldest

brother of our Princess of Wales and the heir to the Danish throne.

After visiting Sweden they went to Germany and then to Brussels; remaining on the Continent so long they returned to England only in the late winter, just in time to spend the twentieth birthday of the Princess of Wales at Sandringham.

In the spring of the next year the Princess retired from public life again, and this time lived very quietly, because another child was to be born, and it was imperative that no such risks as had attended her first confinement should be taken.

This time there were nurses and ministers and doctors in attendance, and the birth took place in orthodox fashion at Marlborough House, when on June 3rd a little son was born, to be given the name of George Frederick Ernest Albert, our present most popular King.

A year later, 1866, came two marriages, both celebrated in England, at which the Princess was present and in which she took the greatest possible interest.

The heroine of the first of these two romances was that kindly Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, the dear friend of the Princess.

It was in March 1866 that the Duchess of Cambridge acted as hostess to the Duc and Duchesse d'Aumale at a stately dinner party given at St. James's Palace. Princess Mary

Adelaide was there, her mother's right hand, and amongst the guests was the Prince of Teck, a very handsome young man, who was attracted by the bonny Princess at first sight. Indeed it is always declared that it was at that dinner party love was born.

It was not his first visit to England, for the Prince and Princess of Wales had made the duke's acquaintance two years previously, and as they had taken a strong liking to him they had invited him to visit them at Sandringham, which he had done. For some reason or other he had not seen the Cambridge Princess on that occasion, so this was his first meeting with her.

Just a month later he visited Cambridge Cottage and walked with the Princess through the glades of Kew Gardens. There he told her of his love, and the following week, in response to an urgent invitation from the Prince and Princess of Wales, Prince Teck, Princess Mary Adelaide and the Duchess of Cambridge all went to Sandringham that they might be staying there when the betrothal was formally announced.

In a very pretty and girlish letter, which was published afterwards, Princess Mary Adelaide told her love story to a friend :

“ The wooing was but a short affair. Francis only arrived in England on the 6th of March, and we met for the first time that evening at

St. James's. One month's acquaintance settled the question, and on the 7th of April he proposed in Kew Gardens and was accepted. . . .

"I long to tell you how happy I am. . . I know I shall have your prayers and best wishes on the 12th of June. . . ."

Neither the Prince of Teck nor his bride-elect were well off considering their station, and it was her wish to be married very quietly in the "dear little Kew" where she had lived her happy girlish life. The village church on the green was the scene of the ceremony, and the bride decided to walk to church so that the village folk who had known and loved her all her life might feel they were really taking part in the ceremony.

Walk she did, between the ranks of rustic well-wishers, and though Queen Victoria was present with the Prince and Princess of Wales and many ministers of state and foreign royalties, simple dress was worn in nearly every case. Most of the men guests—including the Prince of Wales—appeared in ordinary dress without even orders.

The honeymoon was spent at Ashridge, and when it was over the young couple made their home in a modest establishment at Prince's Gate, though afterwards Queen Victoria bestowed on

them a suite of apartments at Kensington Palace. It was at the latter home their first child was born—a little Princess who was christened Mary, after her mother and grandmother, but who was known as May.

To-day that little Princess is our gracious and kindly Queen Mary.

From her first home the young Princess of Teck wrote a long letter, and it must be quoted here, showing as it does the pleasant spirit of young wifehood which animated the writer, and so gives a good idea of her very sweet personality, true home-maker, ideal wife and mother, kindly lady bountiful as she became.

“We . . . have just completed our small establishment . . . it is of course a great interest to us both, and you would laugh if you could hear me consulting with the steward and the lady cook and giving orders. . . . I am finishing this letter after dinner in Francis’s sitting-room whilst he is amusing himself at the piano. I mention this to give you an idea of our tête-à-tête evenings, which are very cosy in the Darby and Joan fashion.”

.

The other marriage was that of the Princess Helena, sister of the Prince of Wales and third daughter of Queen Victoria, who married a

relation of the Princess of Wales, Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein.

Yet another marriage was arranged at the same time. It had been said that the then Tsar of Russia took a deep interest in the Danish royal family, and it may be added that he was greatly impressed by the beauty of its three daughters.

Therefore it had been settled that the second daughter, that sister of the Princess Alexandra who had shared her girlhood's interests, Princess Dagmar, should marry the heir to the Russian throne, and though the wedding did not take place for another year, the Tsar decided also that his daughter Olga should become the Queen of Greece by marrying the newly-elected King George.

As the bridegroom of Princess Dagmar was the heir to the throne, the wedding had to take place in his country instead of hers. November was the time fixed, but the Princess of Wales was expecting to become a mother again in the early spring, so it was felt it would not be wise for her to brave the intense cold of Russia at that season.

Thus she had to let her husband go alone to take part in the festivities of her sister's wedding, though it was a great disappointment to her not to be with Princess Dagmar during her bridal.

The Russian Court was barbaric in its splendour always, and no words can tell the magnificence of

the wedding festivities which celebrated that marriage. It has been pointed out that in royal circles a royal bride breaks away from the old ties far more than does a girl in any other circle of life, and where the wife of a Russian Prince is concerned she must not only change her religion but actually her name as well.

Before the wedding she must be received into the Greek church and newly named by baptism.

The Princess Dagmar was Dagmar no longer, but became the Princess Marie, later the Tsarina Marie.

Early in the new year the Prince and Princess of Wales returned to Marlborough House that the expected birth might take place there, but when February was half-over it was known that the Princess was very ill, suffering from acute rheumatism and inflammation of the knee. Her baby had not been expected till the end of March, but arrived in the midst of her illness on February 20th—her first daughter; and the nation knew that though the little one lived the young mother's life was in danger.

London Society was in a panic, so too were the tradespeople, for all that spring the Princess lay suffering, unable to take her place in the "drawing-rooms" or in any special function. Her father and mother were summoned from Denmark, but after many weeks of suspense they were able

to return home, and later she joined them on the Continent for a course of medical baths.

A whole year elapsed before she was well enough to take up social work, and when she did so she was glad of the aid of a stick.

We all know that fashion is absurd, but it is difficult to realise that to walk lame became "the thing," and all would-be smart women adopted what they called "The Alexandra limp."

.

In 1868 the Princess had so far recovered she was able to pay her first visit to Ireland, where the most elaborate welcome was given her.

Then, as usual, that unhappy country was torn by internal strife, but as the Princess landed she was presented with a pair of white doves, emblems of peace, and the descendants of these doves fill an aviary in Sandringham to-day.

.

In the summer-time of that year the Princess of Wales was back at Marlborough House waiting for another interesting event, but this time she was wonderfully well. Indeed, on the 4th of July she attended a concert at the Crystal Palace in honour of the return of Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, who had been a voyage round the world—which was considered a wonderful adventure for a Prince to take in those days, and on the 6th of July the Princess's second daughter

was born. Victoria Alexandra Olga Marie the young lady was named.

In the autumn of that year the Prince and Princess paid a long visit to the Continent, staying at Paris, Berlin, Vienna, and finishing with a family party at Copenhagen, to which Prince Alexander of Russia and his bride came, as well as King George of Greece and his wife, and the Princess Louise of Sweden, who was engaged to the Danish heir.

Wherever she went the grace and beauty of the Princess of Wales was the subject of remark; indeed it was commonly said that in those days the Court of Europe contained three of the most lovely women ever seen. They were the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, the woman of many sorrows who died by the assassin's hand, the brilliant Empress Eugenie who died in exile, and our Princess of Wales.

.

Fifty years ago travel was almost unknown in smart Society excepting the orthodox trips to the Continent, and the days when Cairo would be a fashionable winter resort had still to come. Therefore, when the public were told that the Prince and Princess of Wales intended to pay a holiday visit to Egypt, the good folks held their breath and wondered what the world was coming to.

In spite of that, to Egypt the royal couple went, and a very jolly time they had. No royal yacht being available, a man-of-war, the *Ariadne*, was chartered and fitted up with what was considered the greatest possible sea-going luxury.

The tour was really a royal one at its beginning, for the party travelled round the Continent by way of Berlin and Vienna, till they came to Trieste, where the *Ariadne* waited to take them to Cairo, then a purely Eastern city, not half-Westernised as it is to-day.

Among the suite was a widow lady, a Mrs. Grey, who acted as bedchamber woman to the Princess of Wales. This lady afterwards wrote her impressions of the voyage, which were published in a book that is full of interest from beginning to end, but not the least interesting part is the description of the Esbekieth Palace at Cairo, where the Prince and Princess stayed.

Mrs. Grey says :

“ The palace is beautiful, full of luxury but without the comfort of an English home. The Prince and Princess have an immense bedroom full of rich French furniture. The beds are very beautiful, made of massive silver, and cost, I believe, three thousand pounds each. My room is so large that even when the candles are lit there might be somebody sitting at the other end without your knowing

it. You could not even hear people speak from one end to the other. It is as high as it is long, and has nine large windows. There is a silver bed, a large divan round half the room, a common writing-table and washstand, a large sofa and very smart chairs. The curtains and covers of the furniture are of the richest silk. Add to all this one immense looking-glass, and you have the whole furniture of my room, which is more like a state drawing-room at Windsor than a bedroom."

For three days the party stayed at Cairo seeing the sights, and among many strange experiences the Princess partook of a feast served in the true Eastern fashion. The whole party sat on the floor on piled cushions around a silver table that was not more than twelve inches high. There were no plates; instead, slaves in wonderful dresses put a succession of gold and silver dishes on the table, and each of the guests helped themselves from the dish with the aid of tortoiseshell spoons that had long handles of coral, everyone eating out of the same dish.

The meal started with cherries, which were easy to manage, but after that came alternate sweets and savouries, then in the middle of the feast half a roast sheep was put on the table, and all had to tear this joint to pieces with the fingers, the Princess among the number, though

probably the royal appetite was not very great by the time that course was reached.

Coffee, served in cups flashing with diamonds, finished the meal. After it came jewelled pipes from which everyone present was expected to take at least one whiff.

Here again the Princess was brave enough to make a venture, though she never smoked as a rule, and it is rumoured she strongly disapproved of the cigarette habit which obtains so generally among women.

After those three days in Cairo, a trip up the Nile followed, the Prince and Princess travelling in a specially-decorated dahabeeyah, one of the strange craft used on that strange river, though in their case the dahabeeyah was towed by a steamer.

Quite a procession of craft was formed. First came the steamer with the dahabeeyah in tow, the steamer acting as a dining-room for the royal party, since there they went for their meals. After the dahabeeyah was another steamer, on which the cooking was done, and here was accommodation for the servants, who included no less than four cooks. Behind that was towed a barge with provisions and live stock of every kind; yet another steamer followed, with many of the Consulate officials, and with this was a barge on which was a beautiful white donkey for the Princess to ride, and a very fine mule for

the Prince. There were other mules and horses for the members of the suite, and in addition there travelled on this barge a French washer-woman and her family, whose duty it was to take care of the royal laundry.

That trip must have been a real holiday, as we hear of delightful days when the Prince and Princess remained on the dahabeeyah watching the desert, and of other days when they took expeditions ashore, she on the donkey, to visit the mummy caves and the ancient temples which stamp Egypt as the "land of mystery."

When they reached Karnak the Princess expressed a wish to see the ruins by moonlight, but as this was impossible, the moon not being full at the time, the Prince arranged that electric lights should be fixed to each of the great pillars, and these, being switched on suddenly, made a scene of weird and startling beauty.

It was doubly interesting, since electric light was in its infancy. In any case it was a blending of the old and the new, and it is doubtful if the Princess had ever seen electric light before.

The royal couple spent the anniversary of their wedding day at Thebes, and after that began the homeward journey. On this tour the Princess added to her collection of pets, for when she reached Cairo again she was in possession of a turtle, two goats, a monkey, a brace of flamingoes, and a white parrot.

Another week was spent in Cairo, where the Princess visited the ladies of the harems, and there is a story that on her last visit to the palace of the Viceroy—there was neither King nor Khedive then—the Turkish ladies dressed her in their Eastern garments, painting her eyebrows, as their fashion is, and covering her face with a veil.

In this costume she went back to her own quarters, where at first even her closest attendants did not recognise her.

From Cairo the royal couple went to Suez, where the Canal was in the making, and there they talked with Monsieur de Lesseps concerning his wonderful work, after which they went back to Alexandria, where the *Ariadne* awaited them.

From there the cruise took them up the Dardanelles, free from the tragic memories the name has for us, and afterwards they crossed the Sea of Marmora to the Golden Horn, where the Sultan of Turkey was to entertain them.

The days in Constantinople which followed were as a story from the *Arabian Nights*. Every morning a regiment of slaves in gorgeous dresses arrived at the royal apartments, carrying every possible description of presents from their master, the Sultan, to the royal visitors.

Banquets were served on plates of solid gold circled with gems, and weird Eastern music was played in honour of the visitors.

H.E. MAJESTY'S FAVOURITE HOMES



11-12

SANDRINGHAM

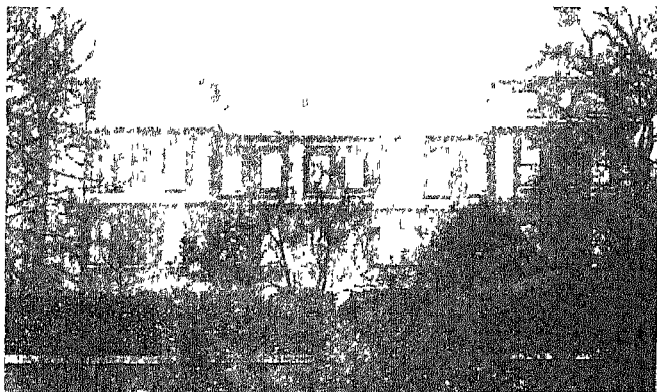


Photo Press

MARLBOROUGH HOUSE

13-14

For ten days they stayed at Constantinople, and so weary of splendour did the young couple become at the end of that time they took to calling themselves "Mr. and Mrs. Williams," and used to slip away from the Sultan and his Court to walk through the streets of the Eastern city to make purchases at the bazaars.

Leaving Constantinople, the *Ariadne* crossed the Black Sea to the Crimea, the royal couple being anxious to visit the scene of that Crimean War which was fresh in the minds of most people then, though it had ended a dozen years before.

They visited Alma, where they were horrified to discover that the graves in which the British dead were lying were ruined and neglected.

The Prince was very indignant, and directly he reached home he used his influence without ceasing until those graves were properly restored and cared for.

On their return from the Crimea they had to pass Constantinople again, and the whole city was illuminated, fireworks bursting in the sky, bands playing everywhere, as the ship passed down the Bosphorus.

The Princess declared afterwards that it was as a scene from fairyland. So long as she lived she would remember it as one of the most beautiful she had ever witnessed.

Again Turkey was left behind, then there came

more happiness, for the *Ariadne* steered to the shores of Greece, where King George and Queen Olga, his Russian bride, waited to give a warm welcome to his favourite sister. There, too, she saw the small baby, Prince Constantine, newly-born heir to the throne, and doubtless was very pleased with her nephew, though later generations knew him as "Tino," the banished King of Greece who played a far from honourable part in the Great War.

For six months the royal couple had been away, and on their return London gave them a grand welcome home.

The following November a fifth child was born—another daughter—Princess Maud Charlotte Mary Victoria, and, because of her coming and the fact that the health of the Princess was not good, the latter could not visit Denmark in order to attend the marriage of her brother Frederick with the Princess of Sweden, dearly as she wished to do so.

CHAPTER VIII

THE SHADOW OF SORROW

The death of the baby Prince—Illness of the Prince of Wales—Prayers in the church—How the nation waited—Transfusion of blood—Thanksgiving.

A VERY quiet year followed that time of trouble, then, on April 6th, 1871, another little son was born to the Prince and Princess, but so delicate was the child at its birth that within a few hours he was christened, being given the names of Alexander John.

The delicacy was proved too well, for the next day little Prince Alexander John died, and soon after he was buried under a grassy mound in Sandringham churchyard.

Never was a more simple funeral than that of this little Prince; an old servant carried the tiny coffin, and the Prince, his father, with others of his children, walked behind. A few other servants and some of the tenants gathered at the grave and showered flowers into the depths, so that the coffin was covered.

To-day a cross stands at the head of the mound, with the text, "Suffer little children to come unto Me," and in Sandringham Church is a

stained-glass window in memory of that little baby.

A lady living at Sandringham was one of those who attended this simple funeral, and afterwards she wrote :

“ There are other memories connected with Sandringham Church besides those of statesmen, preachers, visitors, etc. In writing down the events of life as they occur, what a strange jumble it seems, grave and gay, comedy and tragedy, happiness and sorrow, in quick succession, all interwoven through and through. The funeral of little Prince Alexander John of Wales was one of the long-remembered ceremonies. . . . It was so simply conducted, with such a total absence of pomp and ceremony, that it might have been the child of a country squire ; the tiny coffin covered with flowers and carried with reverence and care by an old family servant—the mother crying at home—the father and children the only mourners. . . .”

Thus in gloom the spring of that 1871 began, but the end of the year brought deeper sorrow still. That November the Prince of Wales went to pay a visit to Lord Londesborough, an almost lifelong friend, and, on returning to Sandringham, complained of pains in his limbs.

Rapidly he became worse ; physicians were

sent for, and as a thunderclap the news broke over the nation that the Prince was seriously ill with typhoid fever, the complaint of which his father had died nine years before.

For days that valuable life lay under the shadow of death, and, dearly as the people had come to love their Princess for her beauty and charm, she gained a deeper hold upon their hearts when it became known she was in actual attendance upon her husband, not sparing herself the hardest part of the nursing.

As it happened, the Princess Alice was visiting Sandringham with her children at that time, and that gentle, brave, and noble lady became the prop and stay of all within the sick-room, assisting to nurse her brother as devotedly as she had nursed her father.

She and the Princess of Wales together watched by the bed, literally fighting day and night for the dear life. The children were sent away, but, later, Queen Victoria hurried from Balmoral to take up her residence in Sandringham also, and the nation knew hope had been given up. From December 6th to the 16th things were at their worst, few dared to hope, and at this dark time two things happened which brought the Princess nearer than ever to the hearts of her nation.

It became known that a stable-boy at Sandringham was ill with the same disease, and the

Princess asked that his name might be included with that of the Prince in the prayers that were offered in Sandringham Church. On Sunday, December 10th, during the afternoon, the Prince rallied slightly, and the Rector of Sandringham received a pencilled note from the Princess :

“ My husband being, thank God, somewhat better, I am coming to church, though I must be back here before the service is concluded, that I may watch by his bedside. Can you not say a few words in prayer in the early part of the service, that I may join with you in prayers for my husband before I return to him ? ”

There was a homely pathos about that letter which went straight to the hearts of the waiting, praying nation. Mrs. C. N. Williamson, the novelist who has written a very charming *Life of Queen Alexandra*, tells us :

“ The congregation was deeply affected when the Princess appeared, and the rector, in trembling words, said : ‘ The prayers of the congregation are earnestly sought for His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, who is now most seriously ill. ’ ”

That night the news was black once more ; the

Prince seemed to be sinking fast ; death hovered very near, and the worst was at its nearest on December 14th, the anniversary of the death of his father.

When the morning came, it was known the die had been cast for life, yet, even so, there was danger from appalling weakness, and finally it was by a transfusion of blood that the royal patient was saved, then a very rare and almost unknown experiment.

The lady whose account of the funeral of little Prince Alexander John has been quoted makes pathetic reference to this dark time :

“ Then there was the never-to-be-forgotten Sunday of the Prince’s illness, when we hardly dared look at the Princess, but could hear her sobbing as if her heart would break. . . . I can still recall her face of happy triumph the first time she brought the Prince to church after his illness.”

.
Christmas Day dawned, however, before it was possible to tell the nation the Prince was out of danger. That stable-boy who has been mentioned sank under his illness and died, but during his last hours the Princess of Wales and Princess Alice found time to see him, and afterwards both these Princesses, as well as Queen Victoria,

visited his relatives to try to comfort them. The Princess of Wales personally attended his funeral in Sandringham churchyard, and afterwards she put a stone over his grave, inscribed : " One was taken and the other left."

Later she gave a very handsome lectern to the church in token of her thanksgiving for her husband's recovery, and on it is the inscription :

" To the glory of God, a thank-offering for His mercies, 14th December, 1871. . . . Alexandra. ' When I was in trouble I called upon the Lord, and He heard me.' "

A little later Princess Alice wrote to Queen Victoria thus, Her Majesty having left Sandringham :

" That our good sweet Alix should have been spared this terrible grief fills my heart with gratitude, for her dear sake as for yours, his children, and ours. The fourteenth of December will now be a day of thanksgiving to us, a day hallowed in our family when one great spirit ended his work on earth and another was left to fulfil his duties, God grant, for the welfare of his own family and of thousands."

As soon as the Prince was fit to travel he went to Osborne for a time of convalescence, but in February he and the Princess were back in

London to take part in the thanksgiving service held in St. Paul's Cathedral, the occasion of Queen Victoria's first public appearance in London since her widowhood.

All who saw the Prince on that day realised how ill he was, and many noted how, at the end of the long service, he had to lean on his wife's arm as they came down the aisle.

Afterwards Queen Victoria addressed a message to the nation which she had written with her own hand. In that she said :

“ Words are too weak for the Queen to say how very deeply touched and gratified she must be by the immense enthusiasm and affection exhibited towards her dear son and herself.”

After that service the royal couple retired from Court functions for a time, and, disguised as the Earl and Countess of Chester—the Earl of Chester being one of the Prince's many titles—they visited the Riviera, where they were joined by the King and Queen of Denmark, and Princess Thyra, Their Majesties' remaining unmarried daughter, the little Princess Thyra who had been in the nursery when her sister had married the heir to the British throne.

CHAPTER IX

MEETINGS AND PARTINGS

The family gathering at Serdensborg—The Prince who played "bears" in the nursery—The pet of the party—Two little cousins—The marriage of a Russian Grand Duchess—The palace of ice—The Prince to go to India—A digression—The good-bye to Dean Stanley—The happy return—The imperial crown.

IN the autumn the Prince and Princess of Wales, with their five children, visited Denmark to join that family gathering that was a yearly institution so long as King Christian and Queen Louise lived, in succession to the gatherings at Rumpenheim.

What these family parties must have meant to all the servants and officials about the Court it is almost impossible to realise.

When he had ascended the throne King Christian had left the Yellow Palace, to take up his residence at Serdensborg, as the residence of the Danish King is called, but it is not a very large mansion as palaces go, for Denmark is a little country which manages matters in a homely way.

To this little palace, in a little town, flocked

each year a perfect army of royalties, with their attendant suites, and the servants who attended the members of the suites. It was not alone the Prince and Princess of Wales who came with their British entourage, though naturally that was large, since it included children and children's governesses and tutors and nurses and attendants. Here, at the same time, came the heir to the Russian crown, with his wife, who had been the Princess Dagmar, and as, even then, Russia was in a state of ferment, and its royalties were in constant danger of assassination, an army of guards and detectives had to be accommodated at Serdensborg to keep watch for the hidden danger that was grimly out of place at such a family gathering.

The royalties thoroughly enjoyed these meetings, though, so far as our Princes and Princesses were concerned, the need of constant watching must have brought home to them the danger to which their less fortunate relatives were exposed.

For instance, the Princess of Wales, with her attention and abiding love for her own folk, could hardly ever have been free from a haunting dread, born of the knowledge that her sister Dagmar, her playmate and her friend, and her favourite brother William, who was King George of Greece, both lived in hourly danger of death from an assassin's hand.

One may be sure that the officials and guards connected with the various Courts used to breathe sighs of relief when the visit to Denmark was over, yet, in spite of the looming shadow of danger, royalties from practically every country gathered at Serdensborg to make holiday in very unconventional fashion.

There are stories of the Russian heir, he who was Tsar Alexander III. afterwards, being a favourite in the nurseries because he was so very tall and big and had a bushy beard, all of which made him a wonderful playmate. He would go about on his hands and knees, with laughing children on his back, while his deep voice enabled him to give awe-inspiring growls which were supposed to be exactly like those of a bear.

There were picnics, too, and games of hide-and-seek in the woods, accompanied by merriment, though detectives and guards lurked behind every tree, keeping watch for the danger that those most concerned were trying to forget.

Who were those children who played "bears" with the bearded Prince in that Danish nursery and in those Danish woods? Where are they now? Of our own young Princes and Princesses there were Prince Eddie (Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence), the elder son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, who died in his young manhood; our present King George; the Princess Louise (now Princess Royal); Princess Victoria;

and the lady who is now Queen Maud of Norway. Pet of the party was little Prince Nicholas of Russia, "Nicky," treasured son of the growling bear and Princess Dagmar, the Prince who grew up to be that tragic Tsar who was murdered in a cellar holding his beloved child in his arms, trying to comfort that little boy with his dying breath.

There, too, was the heir to the throne of Greece, "Tino," a toddling baby; and there was the present King of Denmark, and another boy, very small at those early gatherings, who is King Haakon of Norway in these days and the husband of our Princess Maud.

Tradition, probably speaking with more truth than usual, declares that, from the earliest days, that Prince and his little cousin Maud were constant playmates and warm comrades.

If this is so, there is small wonder the King and Queen of Norway are among the happiest of the royal married couples of to-day.

.

In the year 1874 our Prince and Princess of Wales attended another family gathering, though that was very, very different from those at Serdensborg.

Prince Alfred of Great Britain, Duke of Edinburgh, second son of Queen Victoria, had contracted an alliance—one can hardly say he had

become engaged, for all was too splendid for such a homely phrase—with the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, daughter of the then Tsar, and sister to the Prince Alexander who played with the royal children on his hands and knees.

Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, was a stern man in many ways; he was not popular, because he did not possess his elder brother's charm, but he had very many redeeming points and decided ability, and those who knew him well loved him deeply. Of the Russian Princess it is difficult to become enthusiastic, although, as she is one of the living royalties of to-day, we can hardly judge her so correctly as will those who see her across the perspective of the past.

Still, without being guilty of lese-majesty it may be said that she was an extremely handsome woman, but her beauty was marred by her haughty, not to say disagreeable, expression; also she was credited with being obsessed with the idea that nothing in the world was good enough for her.

"I am a Princess of all the Russias, I am a daughter of the Tsar," seems to have been her ruling thought.

Her fortune was enormous. In all history no British Prince has ever before won a bride with anything approaching her dowry, and Queen Victoria declared herself delighted with the match. Probably she would have preferred the

duke to have chosen a German Princess, but the Grand Duchess Marie was half-German, since her mother was a Princess of Hesse.

The marriage had to take place in her own country, so to Russia a great crowd of royalties flocked. It was in January, the depth of the Russian winter, that the marriage was celebrated, and here in England people read of the amazing splendour of the receptions of state which crowded every day of the wedding celebrations, and of how a palace had been built entirely of blocks of ice, in which a ball was held.

The beauty of that ballroom, with its semi-transparent walls where gleamed a myriad lights, thronged by a brilliant crowd ablaze with jewelled orders and flashing gems, was beyond description, and our Princess of Wales was acknowledged one of the most beautiful women in all that wonderful gathering.

Indeed, the Princess enjoyed that visit to St. Petersburg for the imperial wedding, for, apart from the gaiety and splendour with which it was packed, it gave her an opportunity of seeing her dear sister, Dagmar, the Empress Marie, in the surroundings of her home.

Surely those two sisters loved their confidential chats, and yet, on the other hand, that visit must have shown our Princess the hollow foundations on which the Russian Court rested, and filled her with fresh fears for her sister.

Two military reviews were part of the programme, and, while the Princes attended these, the Princesses went a round of the charitable institutions in Petrograd, or Leningrad, as we call it to-day—it was St. Petersburg then—but guards were in constant evidence and the sense of danger could not be banished.

On the way out to Russia the Prince and Princess stopped at Potsdam to visit the Crown Prince and Princess of Prussia, the British Princess Royal and her husband. There, also, was much state and splendour, but little happiness, and surely the Princess rejoiced when she was back in her dear Sandringham, where she could contrast her lot with those of her near relations whom she had been visiting.

In the year 1875 a bombshell was dropped on the country, one we find it difficult to realise in these days when travel is so much a matter of course, yet this bombshell happened less than fifty years ago, well within the memory of thousands who have only just passed middle age.

The Prince of Wales was to visit India!

People looked at each other aghast. The journey was so long; India was so remote; no British Prince had ever been there before! Would he ever come back? Was it wise to allow him to undertake such a journey?

Think of it and realise how the world has changed in less than half a century. Our King

and Queen have paid two visits to India and have been twice round the world, while our Prince of Wales is wandering the world over and makes many of his journeys by air. Yet less than half a century ago when a man set out for India he gravely made his will and put his affairs in order, as an adventurer might if he were starting for the South Pole to-day without leaving proper *communications behind*.

The Princess of Wales, remembering that jolly time in Cairo, wanted to accompany her husband, but Queen Victoria declared Her Royal Highness's place was at home with her children. She, the Queen, had never travelled, so her daughter-in-law must remain at home also; besides, there was a strong feeling among the public against their Princess attempting such a dangerous journey.

They could not spare their fairy idol to face the unknown dangers by her husband's side; thus the Prince had to go alone.

An excellent idea of the way in which this trip to India was viewed is found in the Memoirs of Dean Stanley, Dean of Westminster, who had accompanied the Prince of Wales on his boyish trip to the Holy Land.

The Dean's wife was Lady Augusta Stanley, and he and she were close friends of royalty. They had received a message that the Prince and Princess of Wales would call upon them on a certain afternoon in order to say good-bye before

his departure to the East. Naturally it would never do for royalties to pay a call and find their hosts or hostesses out, therefore messages of warning are sent invariably whenever a royal visit is to be paid to even close and personal friends.

It is rather a digression, but that practice of the announcing of royal visits reminds the writer of the excitement which rang through England when the news went round that the Baroness Burdett-Coutts, the richest woman in the kingdom, a philanthropist whose name for generosity and good deeds was known the world over, was about to marry a gentleman somewhere about thirty years younger than herself.

In common with her subjects, Queen Victoria heard the tidings, and was greatly disturbed by the news, since the baroness was one of her valued friends. At once Her Majesty ordered her carriage and in it drove to Holly Lodge, Highgate, the home of the baroness, without sending previous warning of her coming, and great was the consternation of the servants when they saw the royal liveries coming up the drive.

It is essential that the host or hostess should be on the doorstep to welcome the royal visitor, but here was Queen Victoria driving up to the house exactly as any other visitor might have done.

When the servants would have rushed to warn their mistress they were stopped by a royal

footman, who told them it was Her Majesty's wish to be taken unannounced to the room in which the baroness sat. The servants were terribly upset, not to say frightened, wondering what their mistress would say, but they had to obey the Queen's orders, so took Her Majesty straight to the room where the baroness was writing letters.

The door closed, and the two ladies were left alone. What happened no one knew, but Queen Victoria looked exceedingly angry when she left Holly Lodge, and years passed before the baroness appeared in Court again, though, in the end, she and her husband were received back into royal favour, perhaps because the marriage had turned out excellently.

And that was said by the royal servants to be the only occasion on which Queen Victoria ever paid a visit unannounced.

However, to go back to the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Word was sent to Dean Stanley to tell him and Lady Augusta that Their Royal Highnesses were calling, that the Prince might say good-bye, and this is what the good Dean had to say of the visit :

“ They came about four in the afternoon, and brought all the five children with them, wishing, the Prince said, to have them with him as long as possible. Fanny was in the library, and the children, after being a few

minutes with Augusta, who was delighted to see them, went to her. The Prince and Princess remained with Augusta and me, and were both extremely kind; the Princess looked inexpressibly sad. There was nothing said of much interest; we were chiefly talking about the voyage. As I took the Prince downstairs he spoke of the dangers, but calmly, saying that of course all precautions must be left to those about him. I said to him: 'I gave you my parting benediction at the Abbey yesterday.' 'Yes,' he said; 'Thank you.' "

Thus it was the Prince went off on his long trip, and during his absence the Princess carried on her Society functions, at times taking happy holidays at Sandringham, and there for a short while she had the happiness of welcoming her father and mother and her sister Thyra on a visit.

It was in the October that the Prince sailed, and in the following May, that of 1876, all the land made preparation for welcoming him home. The wonderful journey that was to have been so full of danger had passed without a mishap, and here was the Prince home, safe and well, again.

It was at that time, or, to be exact, ten days before he landed on his own shores, that it was decided to add the title of Empress of India to the British Crown, and Victoria became Empress as well as Queen.

CHAPTER X

THE ROYAL CHILDREN

Prince Eddie's illness—Sailor Princes—The scare of the broad arrow—Prince George "the Pickle"—Our sailor Prince—Marriage of Princess Thyra—How the King of Hanover was Duke of Cumberland—The tragedy of Princess Alice—"Their Royal Shynesses"—The children who shared the school-room at Sandringham—Fair Princess May of Teck and beautiful Alice of Hesse—The Princess and her children at church—Why the missionary hymn was sung—Visitors at Sandringham—The organist who was frightened of Mr. Gladstone—Sunday afternoons—The Princess and her love for animals—The Prince as host—Three annual balls—The charm of the Princess.

THE autumn of the next year brought a new anxiety into the life of the Princess, though the country at large did not fully realise it.

Devoted as she was to family ties, her children had a very close hold on her heart, but there is little doubt that of them all her most dearly loved was Prince Eddie, who was her first-born.

It had been decided that the royal brothers should be trained as sailors, and the two little lads, one thirteen and a half and the other twelve,

were entered as cadets in the old *Britannia* training ship, which lay in the lovely harbour at Dartmouth. Now she has long been broken up, and the naval college built ashore acts as the training-school instead.

As he was about to begin his naval career, Prince Eddie was taken ill with that dreaded typhoid fever, whose very name had such painful associations for his royal mother. In this case the illness did not last long, and the nation at large believed the lad soon recovered, but there is no doubt that the effects of that illness never really left him. From the first he had been delicate, which was to be expected from his premature birth, and this attack of typhoid left a lasting weakness. He grew up to be a tall young fellow, by far the most handsome of all the family, but his mother was never free from anxiety about his health.

As soon as he was able, the young Prince joined the *Britannia*, and by that time his brother was an enthusiastic sailor already. The two were treated exactly as were the other cadets, and their companions were taught to forget their royal blood. There is a story that one day Prince George tried to tell another cadet how something should be done, when : "I know all about that, you go and teach your grandmother to suck eggs," said the other boy, and then stopped short when he remembered that the

grandmother in question was the Empress Queen.

Among the accomplishments, the young Princes learned seamanship with all its mysteries of rope splicing, carpentering and "going aloft"—the mast existed still in the Royal Navy in those days—besides such practical details as mending their clothes and darning their socks.

In 1878 the Dartmouth Cadets were in a state of excitement, for news had gone round that the Princess of Wales was to attend the annual prize-giving. When she went on board the *Britannia*, the boat in which she sat was steered by Prince Eddie, doubtless very proud of his post, while Prince George pulled an oar as one of the crew.

As soon as they were old enough it was decided the two boys should go for a voyage round the world, and for this purpose the warship *Bacchante* was chartered. She was one of the old type with paddle wheels, and was fitted with sails as well as steam. Noah's ark itself would hardly seem more out of date at the present day.

Presently came tidings from the various ports the wide world over of two jolly unaffected lads who learnt their lessons aboard ship and became thorough seamen too, who went ashore as other boys would do and were in the front rank of adventure and mischief, as hearty, healthy,

English sailor-lads should be. Brothers they were in blood, but they were more than that, for never was brotherly love more real and true than that which bound these two together.

Once while they were at sea the newspapers came out with a great scare. It was announced that both the Princes had been tattooed with the broad arrow on the bridge of their royal noses, and for days leading newspapers devoted space to discussing this boyish prank and its possibly serious effects, as one writer put it. He went on to gravely point out how unseemly it would be for the country to have a king who was thus disfigured—or decorated.

What seems to have been the true version is that broad arrows had been drawn on the royal noses in indelible pencil, and afterwards the Princes presented themselves to the officers of the ship without offering an explanation. Panic set in, everyone in gold lace was horrified, somehow news of the commotion reached the Press, but soap and water removed the trouble, and all ended in a laugh.

It was a practical joke, and its originator was the younger of the two Princes. We call him King George to-day.

It may be added that a servant who was in high confidence at the Court described Prince George as a “regular pickle.” All the households at both Windsor and Sandringham and

Marlborough House adored him, they had endless stories to tell of his jollity and his kindness of heart—and servants are excellent judges of character as a rule.

He was afraid of nobody, and was believed to be the only creature near the Court who did not stand in awe of Queen Victoria; indeed, of his very early days a story went the rounds which told that he offended Her Majesty during luncheon, so as a punishment she ordered him to sit on the floor.

“Your table manners are very bad,” said the great Queen. “You eat like a little dog instead of a little gentleman. Go on the floor where the dogs are.”

Prince George—needless to say this story belongs to the days long before he went to sea—slipped from his high seat immediately and disappeared under the table, where he remained a long time, and was so quiet the Queen began to grow uneasy. Everyone knows that when small boys are very quiet the chances are they are up to mischief.

“George, you may come out,” Her Majesty said coldly.

Out from under the table there wriggled a small pink figure. The Prince had taken off every stitch of clothing, and appeared stark naked before his royal grandmother’s horrified eyes.

“ You said I was a doggie, and doggies don’t wear clothes,” was his explanation !

By the time the voyage of the *Bacchante* was ended, it was plain the younger Prince must be a sailor. Other Princes had chosen such a career before him, some few had proved to be admirals of worth, but the majority had been content with gold lace on their sleeves, and taken no further interest in their profession.

This was not the case with Prince George. Any sailor, of whatever rating, who has served on board the same ship as the Prince will tell you that in all things he proved himself a good seaman, one who was determined to rise in his profession by sheer hard work and ability. He was never so happy as when at sea, and rather disappointed his august grandmother in the fact that even when ashore he absented himself from Court circles. His profession was his life ; there his interests lay ; and when forced to be on dry land he retired to Sandringham, where he ran a model farm, since farming might be called his second hobby. The Prince and Princess of Wales were content to let their second son devote his energies to the profession he had chosen and the retired life he loved, for their elder son was expected to inherit the crown, and as he grew older it was plain he had a share of his mother’s beauty and of his father’s genial charm, even though the public knew him little.

The Prince and Princess were ever in the eyes of the world, but their children were obliged to remain in the background, and were quite happy that it was so.

Thus, after his long voyage on the *Bacchante*, the elder Prince left the sea, to Prince George's great regret ; it meant a parting between these two brothers who loved each other devotedly ; but for political reasons it was not right they should both be out of the country together, or that both should share the same perils. Besides, Prince Albert Victor, as the elder was called—again the Queen would have no second Albert—had to know something of military matters from practical experience, and go to the Universities as his father had done before him.

.

The year 1878 saw two events which were to have a personal effect upon the royal family.

One was the marriage of Princess Thyra, the youngest daughter of the Danish King, to the Duke of Cumberland, a German with no British interests whatever, in spite of his high sounding British title.

To explain the seeming anomaly, it must be remembered that our George I. was Elector, practically King of Hanover, before the British people invited him to occupy our throne. He accepted our realm, but had so little love for it

or for us he refused to learn our language and remained German to the end. His son, George II., was Elector of Hanover as well as King of Great Britain, and so was George III., with the alteration that in 1813 the title Elector was changed to that of King. Thus George III. was King of both countries.

Matters remained till the death of King William IV., when the two crowns had to be separated, because Hanover has the Salic law. While the British crown went to Victoria, the crown of Hanover passed to Prince Ernest Augustus, Duke of Cumberland, brother of William IV., and the Duke gave up all interest in things British, except his title, and even that was almost forgotten before long.

In course of time he died, and his son who followed him was foolish enough to quarrel with Prussia, with the result that he lost his kingdom, which thereupon became part of the Prussian Dominions. The ex-King remained in his palace and had certain rights, but ruled no longer, and then it was that he reassumed the title of Duke of Cumberland, which he had almost forgotten he possessed.

Now in 1878 this Duke of Cumberland died, and his son, inheriting his title, chose Princess Thyra of Denmark as his wife, so the youngest of the Danish Princesses became rightfully Queen of Hanover, though she and her husband lived

under the title of Duke and Duchess of Cumberland. Their son to-day is the husband of the ex-Kaiser's only daughter.

The other event of that year was a tragic one, for it was the death of our Princess Alice. Her children were ill with diphtheria, and nursing them devotedly she caught the complaint and died—died strangely and sadly enough upon the anniversary of the death of her father.

.

Thus, years went on, and always, though the Prince and Princess of Wales were before the public eye, their home life was of the quietest. Their three daughters were all singularly retiring girls; in court they were called "Their Royal Shynesses," and even after they were grown up they remained in the background, seldom accompanying their parents on any great occasion. The public knew very little of them, while Prince Albert Victor was deep in his studies, and Prince George was at sea.

In the quiet of Sandringham the younger royalties remained, the happiest family party possible, their nursery and their schoolrooms shared by their young cousins, some of whom came as visitors on comparatively rare occasions, while others were there so constantly that Sandringham was as their second home.

Amongst the latter were three girl Princesses,
T.

all of whom were so frequently in that Norfolk mansion that they grew up with the young Princes and Princesses of Wales on truly sisterly terms of deep affection.

Chief amongst these was Princess Mary—commonly called Princess May—of Teck, the only daughter of that Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge—now Duchess of Teck—who had been the constant friend of the Princess of Wales through childhood, girlhood, young wifehood and womanhood since those early days of the meetings at Rumpenheim.

Princess May was dear as a daughter to her mother's friend, and a warm favourite with the younger folk, a thoughtful girl, with beautiful complexion and hair of pale gold, a gift for music, a love of study, and a sweet interest in all belonging to home, which she had inherited from her mother.

The Duchess of Teck had married a comparatively poor man, as has been told, but the fact that her means were limited was a blessing in disguise, since it enabled her to give personal attention to the upbringing of her children; and of these, Princess May as the only girl, was naturally her mother's "right hand" in all things. Besides, the Duchess was a wise and good woman who knew exactly how to "train up a child in the way it should go."

No charity ever appealed to her in vain, and

as money was scarce she made a point in giving practical and personal help whenever possible. So, as she was a wonderful organiser, she and her young daughter were in demand wherever there was good work to be done, appearing not alone on boards of wealthy charities, but as helpers in local coal clubs and school treats and such homely affairs.

Above all else the Duchess kept her children simple and unaffected, and while making them happy at their work, she allowed them little gaiety. In a letter written to a personal friend, she said :

“ A child has enough to do to learn obedience, to attend to her lessons and to grow, without too many parties, which take the freshness of children away and the brightness and beauty of girlhood. There are too many grown-up children at the present day.”

So the Princess May had to work hard at her lessons—she is one of the most cultured and highly-educated women of our time—and in addition she darned socks for her brothers and made cakes, and was shown how she might help charity by personal aid since she could not lavish monetary gifts. Above all, she had a deep religious training, the effects of which are with her still.

So it will be understood what a quiet life she led, this Princess May who was to become that loved Queen Mary, who is King George's consort, and how thoroughly she enjoyed those frequent visits to Sandringham, with the healthy, hearty schoolroom fun she shared with her cousins there.

The other two girls were Princess Victoria of Schleswig-Holstein, daughter of Princess Helena, Queen Victoria's second daughter, who had married Prince Christian of Schleswig-Holstein but had made her home in England, and thirdly, a very beautiful girl whose childish face was often remarked to be sad when in repose.

She was Princess Alice—called Alix—of Hesse, the youngest child of that Princess Alice who had watched by her father's death-bed, who had comforted her widowed mother, and then in her own young wifehood had returned to England to help in nursing her brother, the Prince of Wales, during that terrible attack of typhoid.

Now she too was dead, and Queen Victoria had practically adopted the girls she had left motherless. The eldest had married Prince Louis of Mountbatten, so lived her life in England, since Prince Louis was an Englishman by adoption, a good and gallant gentleman who served this country with heart and soul. Another sister had married a Russian Grand Duke, but Alix spent most of her time with her august grandmother in England, and, motherless as she was, she won



Photograph Taken

THE PRINCESS OF WALES AND HER FIRST GRANDSON

*Her Majesty and H.R.H. the present Prince of Wales
taken about his first birthday*

motherly love from the gracious Princess of Wales.

A book already quoted, *Eighteen Years on Sandringham Estate*, may be turned to again, since it is of this period its author writes. Here is something of what she writes of the Princess and the royal children :

“The grand event of the week during the Sandringham season was to see the Princess and her children in church. I do not think I am quite sane on the subject, therefore am hardly competent to write about it. It never occurs to me she is a woman at all, but some exquisite little being wafted straight from fairyland to say and do the kindest, prettiest things all the days of her life and never, never to grow old and ugly but to be wafted back again some day whence she came.

“To see her for once only under that painted window with the glory reflected on her would be a joy for ever, and I had that privilege Sunday after Sunday for months together. And there was Prince Eddie grave and quiet, looking as if the responsibilities of eldership had already begun to weigh upon him, and Prince George, ready for any fun and mischief as soon as the service was over, and up to a few little tricks even there. . . . Then those three dear little Princesses, like everyone

else's little girls, only so much more simple and nicer and all crowding round their mother as if there was nobody like her in the world. One morning they were all smiling at Princess Victoria when the hymn, 'From Greenland's Icy Mountains,' was given out. It was not a missionary Sunday, but she had learnt and repeated it so well in the week that Mr. Onslow (the rector) promised her it should be sung the next Sunday as a reward.

"Sandringham Church has been considerably altered by the new rector. The homely country element has disappeared, and the services are conducted in the correct London style; but I think the Princess will never forget the simplicity of the early days and her 'dear good friend,' as she called the rector, who worshipped her with an old-world reverence and pronounced her name in the service as if it were . . . almost too sacred for mortal voice to utter.

"The Prince looked rather bored at the services and glad when they were over, which is better than being hypocritical and singing the psalms in a loud voice and appearing to be very devout when you are not.

"The Society people staying at the house for the balls and shooting generally left on Saturday, though sometimes they stayed till Monday and came to church. The *bona fide*

Sunday visitors were of a more sedate character. Prime ministers, leading politicians, naval and military heroes, distinguished travellers, authors, the popular preachers of the day—the Bishops of Oxford and Peterborough, Dean Stanley, Canon Kingsley and others—it was a great boon in a country neighbourhood to have the opportunity of hearing these clerical luminaries.

“Dean Stanley struck me as the most impressive, with his mild, thoughtful face and composed utterances—an ideal type of gentleman scholar. . . .

“Of the great rival statesmen Lord Beaconsfield appeared to enjoy his visits the most. Gladstone may have been aware he was no particular favourite . . . as if he knew that under all the civility H.R.H. would dearly have loved to upset his solemnity with a few of his favourite jokes. . . . He (Gladstone) was a terrifying audience in a church, so dreadfully attentive and grim and glum . . . even the village tradesman who played the organ . . . was overwhelmed with confusion at Gladstone's presence. The instrument ran riot, the poor man got more and more nervous, while the Prince waxed more and more wrathful. . . . There was a regular explosion after church . . . he ordered the poor man to be dismissed, but the Princess and Mr. Onslow,

having talked it over, agreed that it 'wouldn't be quite kind to send him away in such a hurry and hurt his feelings,' and therefore concocted a benevolent little scheme for keeping him on, hoping he would improve. . . .

"Lord Beaconsfield was, as we know, the favourite minister both with the Queen and the Prince, and his Sunday visits to Sandringham were very welcome. . . . I do not think he valued the honours showered on him as greatly as was supposed . . . he seemed rather bored with it at times, as if he saw through it all. . . .

"The royal party spent Sunday afternoon in the usual country gentleman's fashion, taking their visitors round the pheasantries, kennels, home farm, and to tea at the Princess's dairy boudoir.

"After the Sandringham season was over and they had gone back to Marlborough House, we subsided into our usual quiet Sundays, and enjoyed them the more after all the excitement. We enjoyed that too, but were glad of the rest between times. Few but royal personages can endure an endless turmoil from one year's end to the other. . . ."

In connection with that mention of the Prince of Wales at church it may be mentioned that the book from which this quotation was taken was

really written as a protest against certain actions of H.R.H., and in plain words the authoress, feeling she had a grievance against him, disliked the Prince very much, though she acknowledged his charm. In many ways she was unjust to him beyond doubt, but so far from detracting from her work, the fact rather gives it an added interest, for at least she wrote as she felt.

Of pets the Princess of Wales had a very great many. For years she was one of the most accomplished of horsewomen, and as a whip used to drive tandem along the country roads. A Hungarian horse was her particular favourite as a hunter, but it was a pair of bays that she drove tandem. Ponies too had been her special fancy always, and she had a beautiful stable lined with white tiles, built for four ponies, whose names were written in gold letters over the different mangers, Beau and Belle, Huffy and Bean. The original four died long since, but they have had many successors, who have borne the same names and occupied the same stables.

Then too Her Royal Highness had a large collection of birds, including a cockatoo, who lived in her boudoir at Sandringham, and was well over a hundred years old when it came into her possession. Also there was the aviary of doves, which has been mentioned already, those white doves of peace that came from Ireland. Of dogs she has had all sorts and sizes, and most

people will remember how she insisted that King Edward's pet, Cæsar, should follow the coffin at his master's funeral. That action is typical of her love for animals.

Much good work and many kindly deeds were laid to her credit, but above all was her interest in everything which helped to secure justice and kindness to those members of the dumb creation who cannot speak for themselves. During the time which has sped since she first came to England, far more than sixty years ago, the treatment of animals has improved in a thousand ways, though there is still much to be done, and no small part of this improvement and enlightenment is due to the care and personal interest on the subject which this royal lady had shown.

It must not be forgotten that while she had lived at Sandringham as Princess and as Queen, and had been always a gracious and charming hostess, in addition she was ever a true Lady Bountiful to the village, and had the interests of her tenants at heart.

For instance, she helped and encouraged the building of a village hall where lectures and entertainments are given. She took keen interest in her husband's plans for dwellings and cottage-building, till Sandringham became a model village, and in their own grounds they built a technical school, where village lads can learn wood-carving and cabinet-making and kindred

trades, while in the village itself is a school for girls, where the pupils are taught spinning and weaving, as well as needlework and domestic economy.

A lonely farmhouse standing on the Lynn road was purchased at Her Royal Highness's instigation and was fitted as a hospital and convalescent home for the use of the royal servants and those who work on the estate. And the church, which is close to the grounds and connected with them by a private gate, is another of her interests, as can be judged by the quotation just given.

Always an accomplished musician, the musical part of the services appealed to her from the first, and frequently she has sent notes to the vicar requesting that some particular hymn should be sung on the following Sunday.

Before leaving the subject of the home life at Sandringham—always fascinating from many points of view, not alone that of morbid curiosity to peep behind the scenes in the lives of the great—it may be forgiven to quote once more from that *Eighteen Years on Sandringham Estate*. The writer gives so close and intimate an account of many gatherings which would be ignored by the ordinary historian.

In a chapter headed "Royal Entertainments," she writes :

"The Sandringham festivities were naturally

the principal excitements of the neighbourhood, and kept us alive all the winter season. These were so arranged that all classes could share in them, and what with county, farmers' balls, labourers' dinners, visits to country houses, meets of the hounds and other sociabilities, everyone from far and near had the opportunity of making acquaintance with their Royal Highnesses. . . .

"I had not been to a royal evening party at Sandringham for years . . . but now there was to be a series of house warmings, beginning with the County Ball. . . . I had forgotten that the royal clocks were kept half an hour faster than ours . . . the reception which had been held before the ball, was over, and the first Royal Quadrille had begun. The balls always open with that ceremony, the Prince and Princess dancing with the visitors of the highest rank, generally with their royal relations, or if none were present, with the next highest—dukes and duchesses. They danced the 'long way' of the quadrille, but if the sides were not filled with the house party, any one of the guests might join in. . . .

"Whenever I went (to Sandringham) I never failed to spend a pleasant evening, and received more courtesy from my illustrious host and hostess than from any house I was ever in. The Prince is noted for his powers of

entertainment and exertions to make everyone enjoy themselves. When a house party is expected, he superintends the arrangements and remembers their individual tastes and pursuits. A gouty squire who once grumbled at having to go, was completely mollified at finding a room prepared for him on the ground floor, the Prince thinking he would prefer it. . . .

“Of the three large balls given every season (the County Ball, the Farmers’ Ball and the Servants’ Ball) I liked the Servants’ the best. It is more unique and picturesque, and the old-fashioned dances allowed—Sir Roger, the Triumph, country dances, jigs and reels. . . . One year the Marlborough House servants came down from London by a special train to share in the ball. . . . The ball opened with a country dance, the Prince and Princess leading off with the heads of the respective departments, and the Duchess of Teck, whose good humour and frank enjoyment made her a great acquisition, with another of the upper servants. . . . The house party, equerries, ladies-in-waiting, and all invited from the neighbourhood, were ordered to join in; there must be no shirking, no sitting out. . . . When the sides had been made up, the Prince and Princess led off with their partners, round and round, down the middle and up again and

so on to the end—the Prince the jolliest of the jolly, the life of the party, as he is wherever he goes. . . . It was so pretty to see the way the Princess danced it (a jig), while the state liveries of the footmen and the green velvet of the gamekeepers and Highland costumes, mixed with the scarlet coats of the country gentlemen and the lovely toilettes and merry tunes made it a sight to be seen and heard [*sic*]. . . .

“The private parties were very pleasant but rather formidable at least to me. In recalling gaieties to remembrance, the evening skating parties stand out as a scene of fairy-like enchantment; the lake and island illuminated with coloured lamps and torches, the skating-chairs with glow-worm lights, the skaters flitting past and disappearing into the darkness. The banks were lined with villagers, the Prince having given them permission to come and look on. . . . The Princess usually wore a grey Siberian style of costume and cap, and looked—I must not go into raptures every time I name her.

“I will not attempt to gild the lily by attempting to describe the personal appearance of my royal mistress. The sweetest of faces is now enshrined in every household in the land. Queens of Society, celebrated beauties from all nations, assembled at Sandringham

from time to time, yet there was an indescribable something about her which threw them all into the shade. . . . Another remarkable thing about the Princess is that whilst most women look better in one dress than another . . . she does not. You see her in full dress, with rows of priceless pearls and those magnificent diamonds, which of all adornments are most difficult to wear in profusion without exceeding the limits of good taste . . . and you think decidedly that evening dress sets her off to the best advantage. . . . You see her in the morning and you think you have made a mistake, and like her better in a plain serge dress. Then in a bonnet, and so on. In her sailor's cap or riding habit, or rough ulster and cap, driving her miniature four-in-hand that might be Cinderella's. . . . You give up all comparisons, and discover what England discovered long ago, that the fairest of her daughters is Alexandra of Denmark, Princess of Wales."

The quotation has been a long one ; in it there has been some repetition of what has been told on previous pages, but it must be remembered that these lines were written from first-hand knowledge by a lady who knew the royal family well, and saw the Princess as the world at large did not.

Her book, *Eighteen Years on Sandringham Estate*, has long been out of print (it was published nearly forty years ago), but in many respects it has an interest entirely of its own, for the author wrote straight from her heart, and no one reading the work as a whole could accuse her of being unduly biased in the favour of her royal landlord.

CHAPTER XI

THE HAPPY MARRIAGE AND THE VACANT CHAIR

The love-story of the Princess Louise—The birth of Lady Alexandra Duff—A holiday at Livadia—The illness of Prince George—The joy of the Christmas betrothal—The sudden sorrow—Death of Prince Eddie—The letter from Queen Victoria to the nation.

THE first of the children of the Prince and Princess of Wales to be married was the eldest daughter, Princess Louise.

She had been the most retiring of them all; no one deserved the laughing pet name of "Royal Shyness" more thoroughly than she did, and the reason generally given was that owing to her delicate health she was compelled to be much in retirement. Besides, she was a great favourite of Queen Victoria, then a very old lady; thus she spent a great part of her time in the seclusion of Balmoral or Osborne with her grandmother. Rumour said that she was the favourite daughter of the Prince; at any rate, she had a very great influence over him. Even as a very young girl she had shown that she had strength of will hidden under her quiet exterior, and in time that strength of will was to be shown.

German Princes flocked about the Court in search of wealthy British brides, and more than one formally proposed for the hand of the Princess Louise of Wales. Queen Victoria loved her granddaughter dearly, but had great faith in arranged marriages, and was no believer in the doctrine that a girl should choose a husband for herself. Therefore more than once a German suitor was bidden to hope, and must have been particularly disappointed when the shy young girl calmly defied the great powers of Europe by declaring that she didn't love the man they had chosen and therefore would not marry him.

She sent all wooers away, and when she was three-and-twenty the public, gossiping as the public will, declared she would never marry.

Suddenly everyone was proved wrong, as once again the Princess proved to have a will of her own.

During the months spent in the Highlands she had tramped miles over the heather, deer-stalking with her father, and had become an adept at the truly Highland sport of salmon-fishing. Naturally all this meant many days out on the mountains and the glens, where social distinction and Court etiquette were forgotten, and much of that time was spent in the society of a man who was a very close friend of her father. This was the Earl of Fife, the head of a very old and noble family, but one who was

considered infinitely the inferior of a royal princess as such things go. Besides, he was considerably her senior; there was almost twenty years' difference in their ages; in fact, he was that winning lad who had attracted the attention of the Princess of Wales during her visit to the Highlands so many years before.

The earl was a handsome man, a gentleman in every sense of the word, and as love laughs at locksmiths so it laughed at the rules and regulations which sought to separate these two.

The Scottish nobleman loved the shy Princess, and all her heart went out to him.

Her parents knew of it—probably the earl spoke openly to the Prince—and consternation reigned. The marriage was quite impossible, people declared. True, her aunt, the other Princess Louise, had married a Scottish nobleman also, but then that Princess Louise had not been so close to the direct line to the throne; besides, her husband had been the future Duke of Argyll and his people were personal friends of Queen Victoria. This proposed marriage was on a different level and therefore out of the question.

The public were quite convinced that the story of the girl's failing health was correct; when glimpses of her were obtained by the crowd all noticed her pale cheeks and evident depression, until her father was won over to her side—not a very difficult task may be, since, apart from

her influence over him, he had a deep and sincere affection for the man who loved her.

There remained Queen Victoria to be reckoned with. What would Her Majesty say when she heard the story?

In the end it was the shy Princess who dared to make the confession. What passed between the two ladies we do not know, but it is easy to read between the lines and guess how Princess Louise wound her arms about the old Queen and begged her, for the sake of her own happy marriage, to let her be happy too.

Queen Victoria gave way to an extent.

"Let the earl come to me," she said.

Again we may not penetrate the privacy, nor know what was said between the proud Queen and the peer who was her equal in pride, but when he left the presence of Her Majesty the earl went straight to the room where the Princess Louise was waiting for him alone, and the next day their engagement was announced.

The news that the eldest daughter of the Prince of Wales was to marry a Scottish earl was a bombshell to all within the circle of the Court, while in Germany a paroxysm of rage ensued. The Kaiser determined to make a personal protest, and actually came rushing over to Windsor with a considerable suite. As he was a ruling monarch, he had to be received with due ceremony, and because he would not stay in

Buckingham Palace, but would go to Windsor, it meant a strain on the aged Queen and her household, who had been used to her retirement so long they had allowed matters to get slack.

However, to Windsor Kaiser Wilhelm came in a rage, and from Windsor he went in a fury that was greater still. Queen Victoria was an autocrat; she had objected to her granddaughter daring to choose her own husband, but when her consent to the marriage had been given she objected still more to this grandson who dared to question her wisdom.

Very plainly she told him to mind his own business, and back to Germany he went.

There came another hitch in the courtship, for we all know the course of true love does not run smooth. One of the German Princes said that the earl was marrying for the possibility that his children might inherit the throne, and, stung by the falsehood of the accusation, conscious of the greatness of his romantic love, the earl declared he would not marry the Princess unless she renounced her royal right. This she was willing to do, but her relations raised objections, and in the end a compromise was effected. She was to remain Her Royal Highness, but if children were born to her they were to take the rank of their father's children alone, and, on their behalf and her own, she solemnly gave up any possible claim she might have to the British crown.

Love conquered. Princess Louise gave up her birthright to become an earl's wife. There is no doubt that this was a love-match on both sides, and both those most concerned wished for a quiet wedding, but this was considered impossible; indeed, it was decided that the ceremony should be of exceptional splendour.

So the shy little Princess was married to the man of her choice at St. James's in the presence of the Queen, of all the British Princes and Princesses, as well as half the peerage; and Queen Victoria's wedding present to the bridegroom was a dukedom, thus raising him to the highest rank in the British peerage.

The duke and duchess were ideally happy, as they deserved to be, the only disappointment in their lives being the fact that no son was given to them. Two daughters came, and, in accordance with marriage arrangements, they were not treated as royalties but were known as Ladies Alexandra and Maud Duff, but the dukedom was to descend in the female line if no male heir were born, and the elder daughter eventually inherited the title.

.

“One marriage makes many” is an old saying, and when the world saw the two sons of the Prince of Wales present at the marriage of their sister it woke with a start to the realisation of

the fact that here were two good-looking young men who had kept single much beyond the age when most Princes in a direct line to the throne are expected to marry.

The Prince of Wales had been barely twenty-two on his wedding day, and here were his sons, twenty-five and twenty-four respectively, with no brides in view.

From that time onward gossip was busy with the name of the elder brother, always coupling it with one of the royal Princesses or another, even though there were very slight grounds for popular opinion to go upon.

For a while the engagement and marriage of Princess Louise had caused excitement, then she retired to her Scottish home, and her brothers and sisters went back to the quiet life they had led before, and the world knew very little about them. Indeed, looking at the brilliantly beautiful Princess of Wales, with her gift of perpetual youth, few of the men in the street realised that she was the mother of a grown-up family.

Yet in May 1891 the Princess of Wales became a grandmother, for the Duchess of Fife had a little daughter who was christened Alexandra. The Princess was delighted with her namesake; the quiet happiness of her eldest daughter's marriage was her great joy. At the end of that year she, with her two other girls, went to Livadia, in South Russia, where the Russian

royalties were accustomed to retire for their holidays, and many will recall a charming photograph of the Russian imperial children playing on the sands there, which was so popular a few years ago.

The happy time the Princess and her children spent on the shores of the Black Sea was ended by sudden anxiety. Over the wires flashed the news that Prince George, who was home on leave, had been struck down by typhoid, that disease which our royalties have such good cause to dread.

Full of fear, his mother and sisters hurried home to Marlborough House, to find the mansion in commotion. The Prince had been the life and soul of a shooting-party at Sandringham when he had been suddenly stricken down. Feeling that it would be difficult to get the best medical aid in so out-of-the-way a place, the Prince of Wales had driven with his son to Wolverton station and brought him to London.

With tender care and good nursing the young Prince struggled back to life, and was so much recovered by Christmas that his mother and father took him to Sandringham for the usual house-party, still sufficiently ill to be considered more or less an invalid.

Nevertheless, the Sandringham gathering was one of the brightest the great house had ever known. The Duke and Duchess of Teck, with

their daughter Princess May, were among the guests; to Princess May the house was her second home, and we all know that the Christmas festivities with their mistletoe are popular with lovers.

So it was here at Sandringham; for, when the New Year came, the nation was told that the young heir to the throne, Prince Eddie, newly made the Duke of Clarence, had won the promise of Princess May, daughter of his mother's lifelong friend, to be his wife, and, as engagements are short in royal circles, the wedding was fixed for the coming *February*.

No announcement had ever caused more widespread satisfaction.

Princess May was a British Princess, she was thoroughly English in her upbringing and her education. Her mother, once Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, now Duchess of Teck, was a kindly, sensible, clever woman, with all the attributes of an ideal mother—it is impossible to give higher praise. The Duke of Teck was of English descent also, for he was the great-grandson of George II.

All seemed well, when practically within a week of the announcement of the engagement there came the disquieting rumour that the Prince was ill. The public have a knack of making light of royal ailments; there is an idea abroad that royalties give way at the slightest provocation,

but never was any popular belief more wrong. Royalties are of all types and kinds, just as are other people, and no doubt some do sit down and weep if their little fingers ache, but that kind of illness is never reported in the newspapers.

Apart from the fact that *noblesse oblige* is one of the first lessons taught in royal nurseries, and because of it our royal families invariably struggle against sickness rather than break any public appointment, it is a strict rule that no mention of a royal illness must be made unless that illness is serious. One would have imagined that people ought to know that ; they would if they had much observation ; but, as it was, the world at large made light of the young duke's illness.

"He has been keeping Christmas too well," they said in jest, and in truth he was so identified with his happy love-story that it seemed impossible to associate grief or danger with him.

He had a slight feverish cold which rapidly grew worse, till, about January 9th, the doctors certified he was suffering from influenza, and in that winter of 1891-2 influenza was a scourge sweeping through the land with a violence that nearly brought panic.

Lord and Lady Salisbury were coming to Sandringham for a brief visit, but on the eleventh the Duchess of Teck wrote Lady Salisbury a

personal letter, doing so to help her friend the Princess, who was devoting herself to her son. In this letter the duchess asked the earl and countess to postpone their visit; she explained that, though the Duke of Clarence seemed to be doing well, the family could not help being extremely anxious concerning him.

Their anxiety was justified. On January 14th, a week after his illness was first announced, a fortnight from the day when the world had been told of his engagement, and just a month before the date fixed for his marriage, Albert Victor, Duke of Clarence and Avondale, died in his mother's arms.

It would be difficult to write of the overwhelming grief which prostrated the Princess of Wales at this loss of her first-born, cut off in the prime of his young manhood. She begged she might lay her dear one in the country churchyard where her baby slept, but that Queen Victoria would not allow—as a Prince in direct line to the throne, the duke must lie at Windsor.

To Windsor they brought him, where there was a military funeral, and there he lies in the private chapel of the Castle, under a marble tomb where his recumbent statue is one of the most wonderful portraits ever worked in stone.

Queen Victoria mourned deeply for her grandson, and the letter which was sent to the nation, signed by her, is said to have been really her

work, which created a very deep impression on the people. It ran :

“ Osborne, *January 26th*, 1892.

“ I must once again give expression of my deep thanks for the loyalty and affectionate sympathy which has reached me from every part of my empire on an occasion more sad than any but one which has befallen me and mine as well as the nation. The overwhelming misfortune of my dearly loved grandson, of his thus being cut off in the flower of his youth, full of promise for the future, amiable and gentle and endearing himself to all, renders it hard for his sorrow-stricken parents, his dear young bride-to-be, and his fond grandmother to bow in submission to the inscrutable decree of Providence.

“ The sympathy of millions which has been so touchingly and visibly expressed is deeply gratifying at such a time, and I wish, both in my own name and that of my children, to express from my heart my warm gratitude to all. These testimonies of sympathy with us, the appreciation of my dear grandson whom I loved as a son and whose devotion to me was as great as that of a son, will be a source of consolation to me and mine in our affliction. . . . It is my earnest prayer that God may continue to give me health and strength to

work for the good and happiness of my dear country and empire while life lasts.

“VICTORIA, R.I.”

Yes, it is certain that that letter, which was sent out to the world in the facsimile of the old Queen's handwriting, was really her own in every sense of the word.

It rings true, and, had it been drawn up by statesmen, probably would have been in somewhat different language.

CHAPTER XII

THE NATION REJOICES

The wooing of the duke—The love-story at Sheen Lodge—The wonderful wedding—Birth of Prince Charming—The christening of the Prince—Death of the Tsar and the marriage of his heir—Princess Maud and her sailor cousin—The rejoicings of the Jubilee—Princess Mary Adelaide of Cambridge, Duchess of Teck, philanthropist—The accident at Waddesdon—The death of Queen Louise—Outbreak of war—The attempt on the lives of the Prince and Princess.

THE Princess of Wales was literally heartbroken at the loss of her elder son ; she retired from all public functions for a long time and her condition caused her family grave anxiety. All were devoted to her ; amongst those who seldom left her side were the young Princess May of Teck and Prince George of Wales, who strove together to console the stricken Princess, who was the real mother of the one and who loved the other as the daughter of her adoption.

Meanwhile the nation awoke with a start to realise that the romantic marriage of Princess Louise and the Duke of Fife might be the cause of confusion. While the Prince of Wales had

had two strong young sons ready to inherit his birthright the claims of the elder daughter had seemed far removed, so no one had minded very much when she had married out of the royal circle and had resigned all claim to the throne. But the death of the Duke of Clarence altered everything. His brother George was suffering from the effects of the typhoid still, and there was only his life between the Duchess of Fife as direct heir to the throne. True, she had believed she had given up her right, but it was discovered that, according to law, she was unable to do this, and if her second brother had died, which mercifully he did not, she and the Duke of Fife would have been future Queen and Prince Consort, whether they wanted it or not.

In Court circles there obtained the belief that Prince George, the best of good fellows, hated etiquette and formality, and was happy only on his quarter-deck. Now he had to give up his sailor's life, to his most bitter regret, and for months remained out of Society, partly because of his ill-health, but also that he might have actual lessons in the manners of Court, the rules of precedence, and the laws of etiquette which a future King must know.

It must have been very hard for him and very uncongenial, and it is to his abiding honour that this Prince put his sea-going life behind him and

devoted himself to those new studies as splendidly as he did.

It is difficult to write of this period without verging on the impertinent. So close and intimate a subject must be dealt with, but rumour, which must be judged, said the Prince had loved Princess May from the first, though he had stood back and hidden his devotion when he had known of his brother's romance. Be that as it may, Princess May of Teck and Prince George of Wales were constantly together in these days, linked not only by childish ties, by their school-boy and schoolgirl friendship, but by their grief for the gallant lad who was gone, and by their devotion to the mourning mother. They lived in comparative retirement, and out of the sadness of that time, happy love, happy romance in the truest sense of the words, was born.

Fifteen months passed and then Prince George, who had been created Duke of York, went to Sheen Lodge where Princess May was staying. There he asked her to be his wife.

Just over two months later the nation threw off its mourning to rejoice in the wedding which made Princess May Duchess of York and future Queen of Great Britain. Gorgeous and wonderful was the wedding ceremony which took place at St. James's on July 6th, 1893. The old Queen and all the members of the royal family were present, so were the King and Queen of

Denmark, and there were present four Indian Princes ablaze with jewels, together with the representatives of all the crowned heads of Europe. But perhaps the guest of honour was the Tsarevitch, the heir to the Russian throne, son of Princess Dagmar of Denmark, whose extraordinary likeness to his cousin, the bridegroom, was remarked everywhere.

The honeymoon was to be spent at Sandringham, and after the wedding ceremony the newly-married Duke and Duchess drove through London in an open carriage to Liverpool Street station, where a special train awaited. Everywhere cheering crowds lined the way, and for two days all the nation kept high holiday. They had cause for rejoicing, for never did a royal marriage turn out more happily.

In every respect *bride and bridegroom* were well suited to each other, and where Albert Edward and Alexandra were fitted to shine as leaders of brilliant Courts, George and Mary are true home lovers, devoted husband and wife, tender and wise parents, devout in their religion, blameless in their private lives.

It has been said of them that though born in the purple they are "middle class" in their ideas, and that is a high compliment if read aright, for are not the middle class the real backbone of our nation?

In June the following year the nation had cause to rejoice again, when the Duchess of York gave birth to her first child, a Prince to whom was given the formidable array of names, Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David—whom we call our Prince Charming to-day.

The Princess of Wales was enraptured with her grandson, and, as his first Christian name was Edward, there was some suggestion that he would be known as Eddie in the royal family, but very sensibly it was decided to call him David, so as to avoid confusion with any of his relatives. Thus David the young Prince was called by his own people for many years, though he remained Edward to the world at large; and lately, it would seem from recent newspaper stories, that Edward he is called by his brothers.

The Prince was twenty-five days old when he was baptised by the Archbishop of Canterbury who was assisted by the Bishop of Rochester, Canon Dalton, and the Reverend the Honourable E. Carr Glyn. The scene of the ceremony was the drawing-room of White Lodge, the home of the Duke and Duchess of York, and the water for the ceremony, specially brought from the River Jordan, was placed in the same golden bowl which had been used at the christening of his august grandfather and of most of the other royal children.

His christening robe was of the finest white

satin and was covered by the actual Honiton lace which had been worn by all Queen Victoria's children and by her grandchildren, while Queen Victoria's bridal veil was used as his christening cloak. The christening cake was a wonderful erection, at its top a cradle surmounted by a crown from which waved the Union Jack.

Among his many sponsors were Queen Victoria, the Prince and Princess of Wales, and the Duke and Duchess of Teck—his four grandparents.

.

It was in the October after the birth of that all-important grandson that the Princess of Wales received a telegram from her sister Dagmar, the Empress Marie of Russia, begging her to hasten to her, as she was in sore trouble. Her husband, the Tsar, had been stricken by mortal illness, and in her grief the Tsarina called to her devoted sister.

In haste the Princess set out for her journey to Livadia, where the happy holiday had been spent more than three years before, but when she reached Vienna another telegram was handed to her telling her that the Tsar was dead.

She continued her journey, however, and joined her sister, who must have sorely needed someone to whom she could turn for sympathy.

The late Tsar, Alexander III., the children's playmate, the bearded giant who scampered on all fours around the nurseries with laughing little

ones on his back, was a tyrant in his own family, and most of all he had been harsh to his eldest son, the poor, well-meaning lad whose features resembled those of our Duke of York, though in character they were different.

That eldest son knew himself unfit to rule, most of all was he unfit to govern a half-civilised country such as Russia. He did not want Imperial honours, his wish was to live in retirement, but the dying Tsar was determined that his son should not only succeed him, but should marry according to his orders, and in this he was helped by his brother, the Grand Duke George, who had married Princess Elizabeth of Hesse, the second daughter of our Princess Alice.

They suggested the young sister of the Grand Duchess would be an excellent wife for the heir to the Russian throne, and so to Livadia the girlish Princess Alice was brought, that Princess who had been educated in England, who had shared the care-free life at Sandringham with her cousins, and had seemed as one of that happy family.

Weeping bitterly, they led her to the death-bed of the Tsar, and holding her hand with that of his son, the autocrat made them swear they would marry. Then he died; and it was to a palace where the dead Tsar lay, where the wedding preparations for the new Tsar were in progress, that our Princess of Wales came.



The April 20th

KING EDWARD AND QUEEN ALEXANDRA
IN CORONATION ROBES

With her sister she travelled to Petrograd, where the Prince of Wales and the Duke of York joined them, and together they took part in the splendid funeral of the dead monarch ; and there in less than a week they witnessed the wedding of the unhappy new Tsar to the weeping girl.

That strange wedding was celebrated practically within sound of the passing-bell, and from that time the shadow of tragedy never lifted from those two lives until the end came in that ghastly cellar at Ekaterinburg, where the Tsar and Tsarina were murdered with their children.

Mercifully that tragedy could not be foreseen, though the Empress Marie was full of anxiety for her son, and must have clung to her sister almost in despair.

Thus, once again, surely our Princess of Wales came back to her home with heartfelt thanksgiving that her life was different from her sister's ; and there in that happy home another love story was soon to be told.

The youngest daughter of the Prince and Princess of Wales, the Princess Maud, had fallen in love with her cousin, Prince Charles of Denmark, the younger son of the Danish Crown Prince and of the Swedish Princess whom he had made his wife.

Prince Charles and Princess Maud had been

playfellows during her frequent visits to Copenhagen to her grandfather's court, and he had spent a good deal of his time in England, joining very many of those jolly gatherings at Sandringham. He was a sailor Prince, so had much in common with her brother, Prince George, therefore that he and Princess Maud should marry was ideal from every point of view, and very happy their romance has proved.

The marriage took place at the chapel at Buckingham Palace on July 22nd, 1896, and the Archbishop of Canterbury, who performed the ceremony, wrote an account of it in his diary, which has been published since :

“ . . . married the Princess Maud to Prince Charles of Denmark, the brightest of the Princesses and almost as young as when I confirmed her. He is a tall, gallant-looking sailor ; I hope he will make her happy.”

The Prince and Princess of Wales gave the young couple Appleton Hall, a fine house, of no great size, near Sandringham ; and at Sandringham also the Duke and Duchess of York were living, though their home was what is called York Cottage in their honour ; really, it was that old Sandringham Manor to which the Prince of Wales had brought his bride before he had built the present mansion.

When they were not at Appleton, Prince and Princess Charles of Denmark lived at Copenhagen, where they had a flat consisting of not more than twenty rooms altogether, no very large establishment considering their position, but it was Appleton which was their real home.

The following year, 1897, saw the splendour of the Diamond Jubilee, the sixtieth anniversary of Queen Victoria's accession, and in the thanksgiving procession everyone remarked on the extraordinary beauty and youthfulness of the Princess of Wales, who wore a dress of heliotrope—her favourite colour—with wonderful pearl embroidery and ropes of pearls.

The strain of the Jubilee rejoicings was very great for the Princess, and when it was over she was glad to retire to Copenhagen for one of the family gatherings which were, as always, a real rest from the cares of state.

On her return to England she was greeted with news that was a deep and terrible grief. Her lifelong friend, the Duchess of Teck, once Princess Mary Adelaide, had died as the result of an operation.

"Death of Princess Mary of Cambridge, Duchess of Teck, philanthropist," says a book of reference recording the fact, and the description is just.

Never did a kinder heart beat in the breast of a great lady than in hers.

.

In 1898, a year after the loss of her lifelong friend, came another bitter grief to the Princess.

The whole year was one of trouble and anxiety. To begin with, in the May there was the death of Mr. Gladstone, for whom the Princess had a very warm regard—in which she did not agree with Queen Victoria—and she insisted upon being present at the funeral of the statesman in Westminster Abbey.

A little later the Prince of Wales was visiting his friend, Baron de Rothschild, at Waddesdon, when he slipped on the stairs and seriously injured his knee. He was brought back to Marlborough House, where he lay ill for many weeks, the Princess devoting herself to him as always. He was beginning to get better, when bad news came from Denmark—the aged Queen Louise was very ill.

Throughout these memoirs there has been occasion to refer again and again to the deep affection all her family felt for the Queen of Denmark, and the devotion of the Princess of Wales to her mother was wonderful. Directly the news came, she prepared to leave England, for the Prince of Wales was on the high road to recovery, so could be left safely.

When the Princess arrived at Copenhagen there was no room for hope. Queen Louise was in her eighty-first year, and her physical powers were decaying, though until almost the last she

retained her faculties and managed her family and her household marvellously ; it might indeed be said she ruled the kingdom as well, for it was an open secret that hers was the stronger will, and that whenever King Christian was responsible for a political movement which was specially clever the people would say, " Ah, Queen Louise has done that."

Now Queen Louise lay dying.

The King of Greece, our Princess's favourite brother, had hurried to his mother's bedside also, and there were all her other children. But it was King George and the Princess of Wales together who kept constant watch ; it was they who were holding the hands of the dying Queen when the end came.

The year 1900 saw the South African War in progress, and consequently it meant a time of much sorrow and anxiety for the royal family, and while in the midst of that there came the only attempt ever made on the lives of the Prince and Princess of Wales.

They were about to pay another visit to Denmark, for the health of the King was precarious, and his children could not bear to leave him long.

On the outward journey the train on which the Prince and Princess of Wales were travelling had been stopped at the Nord station in Brussels, and it was slowly steaming out again, the Prince

and Princess standing together at the window smiling their farewell to the respectful crowd, when suddenly out of the throng leaped a young man, who clung to the footboard of the slowly-moving train and fired a revolver twice at close quarters to the royal couple.

Neither shot took effect, by what was practically a miracle, and in a moment more the man had been seized by the station-master and dragged from the train.

The escape of the Prince and Princess was extremely narrow, as might have been imagined; indeed, it is almost impossible to realise how those two bullets could have been fired as they were and yet do no harm. The would-be assassin, whose name was Sipido, was mad, and in his madness believed, because men were dying in South Africa, it was his duty to kill the heir to the British throne. Of course, no punishment could be given; he was simply confined in a lunatic asylum for life—he ought to have been there before.

In the face of that danger the Prince and Princess of Wales were remarkably cool, and there is a homely touch in the fact that the first thought of the Prince was to send a telegram to his imperial mother to assure her he was safe.

He had that message despatched before half the people in the station realised that anything untoward had happened.

CHAPTER XIII

KING AND QUEEN

Death of Queen Victoria—Opening Parliament—The superstition of the Koh-i-noor—The Duke of York becomes Duke of Cornwall—The new Princess Royal—Preparations for the Coronation—The rule as to coronets and trains—The gipsy's warning—The bolt from the blue—The King's letter to his people—Crowned !

THE closing months of 1900 were darkened by the death of the Duke of Saxe-Coburg, otherwise Prince Alfred, Duke of Edinburgh, the brother next in age to the Prince of Wales.

Ever since his marriage to the haughty Russian Grand Duchess, and his later accession to the German Grand Duchy, he had seen little of his British relatives ; nevertheless, his death was a shock, especially to the old Queen, though, as he was suffering from a very painful disease, it was a blessing in disguise that he should pass away in his sleep from heart weakness.

His mother never recovered from the blow, and when Christmas came all within the family circle knew that the Empress Queen was dying, though the fact was kept from the world at large.

In November there had been a state visit from

the German Emperor and Empress and their two eldest sons, and, in view of what has happened since, it is interesting to recall that during a brief visit to Sandringham, Bishop Creighton preached a strong sermon on the need of a good understanding between Great Britain and Germany. Afterwards the Kaiser spoke to the bishop, saying: "You are preaching a doctrine which I am endeavouring with all my strength to impress upon my people."

After that visit the aged Queen seemed to regain a little strength for a week or two, but she was evidently very ill, though she rallied sufficiently to send a Christmas message to the soldiers in South Africa and to receive General Roberts, whom she created an earl.

Practically that was her last state duty. Less than a month later her children were summoned to Osborne, and there, on January 22nd, 1901, the Queen died, and her son ascended the throne with Alexandra as his consort.

There was some discussion as to the name by which the new King would be known. Until his father's death he had been called Albert, Prince of Wales, as has been said, and probably his mother expected him to become King Albert I. of Great Britain, but ever since the death of the Prince Consort he had been Albert Edward, Prince of Wales, and, true to his faculty of always doing the right thing, he decided to discard the

Albert, which was a foreign name, and reign by the old English name of Edward.

Thus it was as Edward VII. he began his reign.

It was typical of the vastness of the empire over which he and his consort ruled that while every other British monarch had addressed merely his "people" at the Coronation, King Edward's messages ran: "To my people—to my people beyond the seas and to my people and the Princes of India."

.

The new King and Queen determined to sweep away the gloomy stodginess of the Victorian Court and to inaugurate a new season of splendid gaiety; the only pity is that they had not come to the throne long before.

For instance, Queen Victoria had declined to open Parliament for many years, and even when she had done so she had been a rather shabby little figure, a queer mixture of dowdy black clothes and flashing diamonds, and had hurried over the function as much as possible. But King Edward intended that his Parliament should open with all possible splendour, though he had to wait until the orthodox year of mourning was past.

In that first year of her reign as Consort, Queen Alexandra was to know a very personal grief, for it was decided that the Duke of Cornwall,

otherwise the Duke of York, her only son, should make a tour of the world, his wife accompanying him. The mention of the two titles may need some explanation.

The eldest son of the ruling monarch of England is Duke of Cornwall by right of birth ; that is, the title becomes his directly his father is king, and, as Cornwall is a more important dukedom than that of York, the Duke of York automatically became the Duke of Cornwall and York when his father ascended the throne. The title Prince of Wales is purely an honorary one and bestowed upon his son by a king if he wishes to do so, but it is not a question of birth-right as is the dukedom of Cornwall.

The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall must have felt parting with their four young children very deeply, but it was never their way to shirk duty, so good-byes were said, and the little ones were left in the care of their relatives, particularly of their aunt, the Princess Victoria.

In February, the following year, came the state opening of Parliament, and it was typical of King Edward's attitude towards his beautiful Queen that he ordered her chair of state should be made the same as his own and the two should be placed side by side.

Hitherto the Queen Consort had had to be contented with a much plainer chair placed quite in the background, while in Queen Victoria's

time the Prince Consort never had a chair at all, but was obliged to stand at the back of his wife's seat of honour. Now the consort's chair is placed beside that of the monarch.

Of all articles of jewellery, probably a crown is the most uncomfortable and the most unbecoming in the ordinary way, but Queen Alexandra had not studied the art of dress for nothing, so took care that her crown, at least the small one that she wore on such occasions, should suit her graceful beauty.

Her dress at that opening of Parliament was black, but over it she wore a long robe of crimson velvet edged with ermine ; and from her neck, almost to her feet, were strings of diamonds and pearls, the great diamond, the Koh-i-noor—"The Sea of Light," as the name means—glowing on her breast ; while her crown, a small, light, very artistic erection of diamonds, was placed far back on her head in a way that proved infinitely becoming.

That mention of the Koh-i-noor recalls the history of that wonderful jewel and the curious legend connected with it. According to tradition, the jewel had been a royal treasure in the East for countless ages ; certainly its history is comparatively clear since it fell into the hands of Sultan Ala-ed-din in 1304. Bloodshed and horror followed its career wherever it went, till gradually there arose the superstition that the diamond

brought a curse to any man who possessed it—while, on the other hand, it had proved a mascot, a bringer of good fortune, to the few women who had ever owned it.

In 1849, when the Punjab was taken over by the East India Company, the diamond, then in the State treasury, was presented to Queen Victoria and remained her private property. Now Queen Victoria was considered far superior to any superstition, but probably the history of the jewel gave rise to certain uneasy thoughts, and when she made her will she laid down that the Koh-i-noor become a Crown jewel, yet not the property of the King, but of the Queen Consort.

Thus the curse, if curse there were, is averted, and the diamond must remain the property of a woman for all time.

.

Almost directly after that brilliant function the King, accompanied by the Queen, paid a brief visit to Germany to see his sister, the late Empress, who had been our Princess Royal. She, poor lady, was slowly dying from that very dreadful disease, cancer, and this visit from her brother and his wife, who left the gaiety and grandeur of their Court to sit by her bed of suffering, must have meant much to her. It was a kindly act, a true sign of the brotherly

and sisterly love which triumphed over family prejudice and Court intrigue.

The year was still young when there was gladness again in the royal family, for the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall returned from their world-wide trip, and, on their landing the King made his son Prince of Wales. Thus, from this time, the title Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York was forgotten, and it was as Prince and Princess of Wales that we knew and loved them, as the previous Prince and Princess of Wales had been loved before, until the time came for the Prince, in his turn, to wear the crown.

On his accession, King Edward decided it was not fitting that his eldest daughter should remain as the wife of a non-royal duke, thus he bestowed upon her the title of Princess Royal, which she bears still. At the same time, by royal patent, her daughters were given royal rank, and became Princess Alexandra and Princess Maud of Fife.

At the death of their father—which followed shipwreck—the elder of the Princesses inherited his title as Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Fife in her own right, but on her happy marriage with her cousin she gave out she preferred to be known by his title alone, and thus is spoken of to-day as the Princess Arthur of Connaught. At her death—may it be long delayed—her son, who bears the fine old British names of Alistair

Arthur, will succeed her and become Duke of Fife, with the surname of Windsor instead of Duff.

But that is looking far forward, and concerns matters which followed long after the accession of Edward VII. to the throne.

.

The air was full of rejoicings, the nation delighted to welcome back their sovereign's son and his wife, and was glad to know them by the familiar titles his parents had borne for so long. Peace had been signed at Pretoria, and all was put in hand for the gaiety of the Coronation. King Edward refused to be crowned while the nation remained at war, therefore he had postponed the ceremony for a considerable time.

There had been, of course, no other Coronation since the days when Queen Victoria had come to the throne as a young girl, and in that space of nearly three-quarters of a century the whole ways of life and thought had altered. Though the stately ceremonial of a Coronation as a service would remain the same in the main respects, in details there were many alterations that must be made.

During so many years of Queen Victoria's reign there had not even been Court functions, therefore all who were responsible had to read up authorities and study the details to be observed

in the various ceremonials. As a case in point, it may be mentioned even the actual length of trains worn on such occasion, and the furs with which they are edged, is carefully laid down by what may be termed the law. For instance, the Queen Consort's train must be six yards long, bordered with white ermine, while that of a Princess is of four yards, also edged with ermine. A duchess is allowed a train of two yards which must be furred with miniver. A marchioness is allowed one-and-three-quarter yards, with miniver four inches deep. A countess has a train a yard and a half long, with three inches of miniver, a viscountess a yard and a quarter, with two and a half inches of miniver; while a baroness is allowed a train only a yard long, but may have two bars of ermine. It is the same with the coronets. A duchess's coronet is a round "crown" surrounded by eight "strawberry leaves," as the decorations are called, though they more resemble shamrocks. A marchioness wears a coronet in which there are four pearls and four strawberry leaves alternated. A countess has eight silver balls on her coronet, each mounted on gold rays, with tiny strawberry leaves between each ray. A viscountess has simply sixteen silver balls upon her coronet, and a baroness six silver balls, and, as it is with these questions of clothes, so with every other detail concerning the great celebration.

The Coronation of Edward VII. and Alexandra was fixed to take place on June 26th, 1902, eighteen months after the accession. From every country royal and imperial guests came to do honour to the august couple, and London was gay with bunting.

The day was to be a holiday throughout the land and scenes of rejoicing were on every side.

.

For many years the story of a gipsy's prophecy had been common talk. It was said that as a young man King Edward had discovered an encampment somewhere upon the downs near Brighton, and one of the dark-eyed women had asked him to cross her hand with silver. By way of a joke he did so, and as she looked at the lines of his palm she started.

"You come to me as a commoner," she said, "but I see you are royal. One day you will be King of a great country."

"Oh, then, I shall be King," he said with a laugh.

She shook her head. "You will reign—yes," she said. "But when you come to be crowned you will be in danger. The Coronation will not take place."

There is the story as it was told hundreds of times in the forty years before the Prince came to the throne. Every newspaper had it at some

time or another, everyone in England seemed to have heard of it, so in all probability it is far more true than such rumours are as a rule. It was revived and repeated from lip to lip during those sunny June days of 1902. The gipsy was at fault this time, people said ; the King would be crowned, that was certain. But some few felt nervous, though they agreed it must be all right, the King and Queen being so popular ; nothing would go wrong with their crowning.

In the very week of the holiday came the rumour that the King was ill.

“ A touch of lumbago,” said some folks lightly, and went on merry-making, but the few who knew the inner meaning of such an announcement looked grave. No illness would be mentioned on the eve of the Coronation unless it was very, very serious.

They were right. On June 24th, two days before that fixed for the ceremony, it was announced that the King was suffering from perityphlitis, which necessitated an immediate operation, and his life was in the gravest danger.

How sudden was the seizure may be imagined from the fact that at least one magazine, going to press a little ahead, came out with a detailed account of the Coronation, with a full-page illustration showing the archbishop in the act of placing the crown on the King's head.

.

On Coronation Day that should have been King Edward lay at Buckingham Palace in the shadow of death, while at St. Paul's Cathedral and other places of worship all over the kingdom special services were held, with prayers for his recovery.

Most of the royal and imperial guests hurried back to their own countries, but by June 30th, when it was certain the operation had been successful, the bonfires which had been prepared for the Coronation were lighted, and on the second and third of July reviews of the Colonial and Indian troops were held by the Prince and Princess of Wales.

Their own anxiety must have been very great, for more than common affection bound the Prince to his father, and the Princess had shared his grief, had borne with him the strain of the operation and of watching by the sick-bed ; but, rather than disappoint the soldiers from overseas and the people at home, the royal couple set aside their private feelings and appeared in public. It was an act very typical of them.

On July 5th the King was announced out of danger, and it was decided on August 9th the delayed Coronation should take place, though it would have to be curtailed because of His Majesty's health. In order to complete his recovery, King Edward had a short yachting cruise after he left his sick-bed, before he came to London, and

then indeed a right royal welcome awaited him.

On the eve of his Coronation King Edward addressed a letter to his people, and it is one that is well worth quoting. He said :

“ On the eve of my Coronation, an event which I look upon as one of the most solemn and important in my life, I am anxious to express to my people at home, and in the Colonies and in India, my heartfelt appreciation of the deep sympathy which they have manifested towards me during the time my life was in such imminent danger.

“ The postponement of the ceremony owing to my illness caused, I fear, much inconvenience and trouble to all those who intended to celebrate it, but their disappointment was borne by them with admirable patience and temper.

“ The prayers of my people for my recovery were heard, and I now offer up my deepest gratitude to Divine Providence for having preserved my life and given me strength to fulfil the important duties which devolve on me as sovereign of this great empire.”

So the Coronation took place, though underlying all its magnificence, which was truly regal, there was a sense of keen anxiety lest the King should have a relapse. The Queen went through

the long ordeal without faltering, but she must have been racked with fear that at any moment her husband should break down. Later there was a very stately thanksgiving service for the complete recovery of His Majesty, and on that occasion the Lord Mayor of London presented the King with a purse containing a hundred and fifteen thousand pounds, which had been collected from his subjects as a Coronation gift.

At His Majesty's request the sum was at once handed over to the hospitals, and thus was devoted to charity.

The King had not quite regained his strength, so after a pretty ceremony at which the Queen made her first public appearance alone and presented war medals to some of the troops—troops who had distinguished themselves in South Africa—he and she went away for a long cruise which restored him to health.

The end of the year saw them back in London, and it was a very gracious and kindly thought that made the Queen give a Christmas dinner to the widows and children of men who had fallen in the late war.

CHAPTER XIV

CROWDED YEARS

Lady Dorothy Nevill's memories—Peril of fire—The heroism of the Hon. Charlotte Knollys—Crowded years—Prince Charles becomes King Haakon—Visit from the King of Greece—The King of Spain's search for a British bride—Death of the King of Denmark—The Norwegian Coronation—The visit to Italy—King Edward's death—The nation's mourning—Sunset and evening-tide.

LADY DOROTHY NEVILL, the wonderful old lady who wrote a most entertaining book of her experiences throughout a long, long life, gives a little paragraph in her book which shows that as crowned King he who had been Prince of Wales so long kept his kindly charm still. She says :

“ . . . the King once did me the honour of inviting me to Windsor, amidst all the splendours of which I found the same kindly hospitality as of old. I was much interested whilst there to be shown all the splendid works of art which now, thanks to the enlightened taste of Edward VII., have been arranged in such a manner as to ensure a full appreciation of their artistic worth.”

While on the subject yet another quotation from Lady Dorothy's book may be made, as illustrating the thoughtfulness and courtesy the King invariably displayed.

“ . . . I may mention, as showing the immense tact and kindliness of feeling possessed by . . . Edward VII., that when the French municipal councillors were being shown over Windsor Castle, special orders were given that the flags annually presented by the Dukes of Marlborough and Wellington, in remembrance of the victories of Blenheim and Waterloo, should be placed out of sight during the visitors' progress through the state apartments. In addition to this the Waterloo Gallery, for that day only, was specially designated by a name which could recall no painful memories to the descendants of the vanquished brave. The Frenchmen were fully aware of the delicate solicitude which had been shown for their feelings, and were much touched and pleased at the graceful consideration of their royal host.”

.

At the end of the next year—December 10th, 1903—an accident happened which nearly cost Queen Alexandra her life.

As usual, the royal family was gathering at

Sandringham for the Christmas, and she had gone in advance of the King.

In the middle of the night, when she was asleep, her bedroom was suddenly enveloped in flames—the result of a defective flue. Mercifully, her lady-in-waiting, Miss Knollys, always Her Majesty's most trusted friend and companion, who was sleeping in the next room, was awake.

Realising the danger of the Queen, she rushed into the royal bedroom and literally dragged Her Majesty to safety, being badly burnt about the hands in doing so. The Queen escaped injury, but it was by a very narrow margin, and Charlotte Knollys was the heroine of the hour, though, with the modesty of the truly brave, she shrank from publicity.

The nation at large read of the King's gratitude and realised the emotion which shook His Majesty when he knew the danger through which his beloved consort had passed.

Within these limits it is impossible to attempt even a brief description of the doings that crowded her life during the years that Queen Alexandra spent as Queen Consort.

Volumes could be filled with accounts of the glittering pageants in which she took part, for with her influence the British Court, which had been under a cloud so long, burst forth as a scene of gaiety that could hardly have been surpassed.

The year 1905 saw the birth of the youngest son of the Prince and Princess of Wales, little Prince John, who died in 1919. Perhaps because he was the namesake of her own baby who died so young, this little boy was the favourite grandson of the Queen, and later, when it became known that he was so delicate that there was little hope of his living, he entwined himself still closer round her tender heart.

Young-looking and beautiful as she remained, the Queen had nine grandchildren—the two young daughters of the Duchess of Fife, the six children of the Prince and Princess of Wales (Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, born June 23rd, 1894; Albert Frederick Arthur George, born December 14th, 1895, now the Duke of York; Victoria Alexandra Alice Mary, born April 26th, 1897, now Viscountess Lascelles; Henry William Frederick Albert, born March 31st, 1900; George Edward Alexander Edmund, born December 20th, 1902; and, lastly, little Prince John, born July 12th, 1905), and the son of Princess Maud of Wales and Prince Charles of Denmark, now called Prince Olaf.

To that royal trio the year 1905 brought a remarkable change.

Until then Sweden and Norway had formed one kingdom ever since the days of Napoleon, but now Norway broke away from her sister-country and, declaring herself independent, asked that a

Danish Prince should be her King. The choice fell on the Prince Charles. He took the truly Norwegian name of Haakon, and was duly elected to the throne. The flat in Copenhagen knew him and his wife no more, and even Appleton Hall is seldom visited now ; they are rulers of a country great in tradition, though it may rank as of secondary importance to-day. Probably of all Continental royalties they are the most completely happy in their home lives.

.

That year that saw the birth of little Prince John and the elevation of Prince Charles of Denmark to the throne of Norway saw also another parting between Queen Alexandra and her son, for the Prince and Princess of Wales set out for their second voyage round the world.

That meant sorrow, but the year held joy for the Queen also, because she welcomed her favourite brother, King George of Greece, to her home.

The King of Greece stayed quite a long time, as royal visits go, and everyone remarked on the delight his sister showed in his companionship. That year saw also a great deal of splendour at Court, for the young King of Spain, hardly more than a boy, came to England, and it was an open secret that he was seeking a bride. No engagement was announced, but rumour had begun ;

and meanwhile King Edward and Queen Alexandra seized the opportunity his visit had accorded them for a series of the brilliant gaieties in which their souls delighted, while soon after his return it was known that he had chosen an English Princess for his bride, his choice being that Princess Ena of Battenberg, daughter of our Princess Beatrice, who went to Spain and, marrying the young monarch, ascended the throne as Queen Victoria, the beautiful Queen Victoria of to-day.

The following year, 1906, saw trouble for the Queen again, for her father, King Christian of Denmark, died. In this case, however, dearly as his children loved him, there was much to soothe their grief—he had lived far past the allotted age of man, and since the death of his wife had owned he had no wish to live. He died peacefully, happily, his children round his bed; and from that time the family gatherings at Copenhagen ceased.

King Frederick and his wife Louise ascended the throne, and, popular though they were with their relatives, it could not be expected that the European royalties would gather round them as they had done about the old King and Queen.

Little else need be told of King Edward's reign; it was a succession of brilliant entertainments and of magnificent hospitality to other monarchs. A year after the election of Charles

of Denmark and his wife, Maud of Wales, to be King and Queen of Norway came their Coronation, which was attended by Queen Alexandra. Afterwards the King and Queen of Norway came to Britain, and no royal personages have ever been more popular than they and their small son, Prince Olaf, who was seen with his grandmother so frequently he became quite important in the public eye. He learned to love his mother's country dearly, and later, when he was called upon to choose the University at which to finish his education, decided upon Oxford, thus tightening the bonds which bound him to all here. *Also that choice enabled him to spend much time with Queen Alexandra, to whom the passing of years made him yet more dear.*

Shortly after that visit of the King and Queen and heir-apparent of Norway, there arrived on our shores the Empress Marie of Russia, mother of the then Tsar, and, in her girlhood, the sister Dagmar who had been so loved by our Queen. The companionship of that visit must have been very dear to both royal ladies, and when the time for the return of the Empress came, so reluctant was Queen Alexandra to part from her sister that she travelled with her as far as Italy, there receiving a very warm and splendid welcome from King Victor Emmanuel.

Hospitality was the keynote of the British

Court in the days of Edward VII. A succession of crowned heads and other distinguished guests visited the country, and great function followed great function in brilliant array. Amongst the more personal visitors, those who were near relations as well as contemporary monarchs, may be mentioned the King and Queen of Denmark. Their Majesties paid what was officially described as "a state visit on their accession to the throne," yet we may be sure it was a visit of affection as well, remembering how attached "Princess Alexandra" had been to "her brother Frederick" in the old days.

King Edward and Queen Alexandra returned that state visit with due formality—and affection—afterwards extending their travels to Norway, where the Queen had great delight in visiting her daughter in her own home. Afterwards they went to Sweden.

On the whole, however, the absences from the country of the royal and imperial couple were brief. They devoted themselves to their arduous duties as leaders of the realm, and if much attention was given to the social display and regal state which must fall to the lot of kings, never did either neglect the more serious issues of life. The fact that King Edward will go down to history as Edward the Peacemaker tells much, since he too reigned in troubled times, when the war cloud was on the horizon, though

it was not to break yet ; while his consort, sharing his splendour, worked always for those good causes with which her woman's heart was bound so closely.

To give a detailed list of her efforts on behalf of those who are handicapped in the race of life would be impossible ; but mention must be made of the active personal interest she took in the preparation of the volume known as *The Queen's Christmas Carol*, and the even more popular *Queen Alexandra's Christmas Gift Book*, which contained reproductions of scenes and portraits "snapped" by Her Majesty, ever an enthusiastic photographer. The snapshots, most beautifully reproduced, had a very personal touch, and, looking through the pages, the pleasant home life and close home ties of that great lady were revealed unconsciously to her people. By the sale of those two books it was estimated more than thirty thousand pounds was raised for charity.

In February 1910 Parliament was opened by their Majesties in full state, when many spectators remarked how well King Edward looked, and that his lovely Queen appeared younger than ever ; it was impossible to realise she had entered her sixty-sixth year. In the following month the King visited the Continent, and it was rumoured he had been obliged to absent himself from town since rest was

necessary from reasons of health ; but soon he returned, apparently as ready as ever to lead the social life of the country, and the nation at large forgot its brief forebodings.

The season was particularly gay ; trade was good, as trade must be with a brilliant Court, and all seemed well when the blow that had been scarcely threatened fell with appalling suddenness. The nation was told definitely that the King was ill ; still, it was hoped the indisposition would pass ; but on May 4th it was known hope had been abandoned.

In the early hours of May 5th, 1910, Edward VII., Edward the Peacemaker, had died at Buckingham Palace in the presence of his wife, who had not left his side throughout his illness.

For nine years and three months he had reigned, the most popular monarch who ever ruled in our land. During the two days he lay in state in ancient Westminster Hall it was estimated four hundred thousand people of all ranks passed before his coffin in silent homage, and truly it may be said that every one of all that mighty gathering sorrowed as for a friend.

The day of his funeral, May 20th, was kept as a solemn fast throughout the country. In 1901 the world had wondered at the majestic pomp with which Queen Victoria was laid to rest, but that grandeur was far eclipsed by the procession which followed the King to his grave ; nine

crowned Kings and thirty Princes riding with the coffin across London, and again from Windsor station to St. George's Chapel, where his marriage vows had been spoken so many years before.

With that pageant rode the widowed Queen—a slender, veiled figure—her devoted daughter, Princess Victoria, then, as ever, by her side. The great heart of the people mourning for the dead King mourned with the widowed Queen, hoping—perhaps not in vain—that their silent sympathy would strengthen and comfort her in her sorrow.

In one feature that funeral of King Edward was unique, apart from its grandeur. As is usual in such cases, His Majesty's charger was led riderless after the bier, but near it came a small white terrier, the devoted companion of his royal master. Queen Alexandra, the devoted champion of animals, had wished little Cæsar's love should be recognised thus—that where others mourned, he should have his place.

CHAPTER XV

THE QUEEN MOTHER

The Queen Mother—Joys and sorrows—Dark days—
Good deeds well done—The passing of “Our
Very Dear Lady.”

ON the death of King Edward his crown passed to his only son, our present King George, and, hard though it must be for any royal couple to take the place in the hearts of the nation which had been filled by “Edward and Alexandra” for so long, it was felt the dead King had left a very worthy successor. Without impertinence it may be added that in many ways King George and Queen Mary are utterly different to the royal pair who filled the throne before them, but they are not less worthy of all loyal love and admiration. The nation is fortunate in being ruled by a king who is so truly good as a man—good husband, good father, good son—as well as wise and kindly ruler, and in his Queen he has a consort fitted to be by his side. Their home life has had never a shadow upon it, save such as death must bring to rich and poor, and all good works and generous deeds find ready sympathy and generous help from this truly great yet kindly royal couple.



Central News

H^{ER} MAJESTY STARTING FOR A ROSE DAY DRIVE

One of the very last photographs of the Queen Mother

In passing from her position as Queen Consort, Queen Alexandra must have been content, knowing how splendidly her idolised son and his Queen would follow in her husband's steps.

By all precedent, on the death of King Edward his widow would have been known as the Queen Dowager, but, rightly or wrongly, the word "dowager" has become associated in the popular mind with haughty and aged personalities, and neither adjective could be used in connection with this gentle, lovely lady. Hence it was with general satisfaction that the people learned Her Majesty had requested she might be called "The Queen Mother"—her choice of such a title was another proof of her peculiar gift of always doing just the right thing in the right place.

It was hoped that when the first sting of her grief had passed she would remain a popular and brilliant figure in London Society, since King George—ever thoughtful for the mother he adored—ordered the two houses which had been her dearly-loved homes during the greater part of her married life, Marlborough House and Sandringham, should be her homes still.

During the earlier part of her fifteen years of widowhood this hope was fulfilled to an extent, but towards the latter part of the time many circumstances combined to keep her in retirement in Norfolk. Yet, whether at Marlborough House or Sandringham, she did not lose touch with the

world, and, as always, her activity in the cause of charity was unremitting. As a case in point, in 1912, the fiftieth anniversary of her coming to London, the festival called Alexandra Rose Day was instituted, when artificial wild roses, made by the crippled and the blind, are sold in the streets for the benefit of hospitals and convalescent homes—it was the first of the many “flag days” to which we have become accustomed, but for some few years it remained unique.

Each year until 1924, when her health made it impossible, the Queen Mother would drive through London streets, choosing a long and circuitous route, stopping to thank individual sellers of the flowers and helping the good cause in every possible way.

The very first charitable institution with which Her Majesty was connected was the British Home for Incurables at Streatham; of this she became patron in May 1863, and to the last the institution had a special claim on her, as is shown by a letter she wrote to the President, the Duke of Norfolk, only a few months before her death :

“Many thanks for your letter about my particular incurables’ hospital at Streatham, in which I have always taken the greatest interest—I may say personal interest—ever since I first came to London.”

Not far from the Streatham Home is the Normal College for the Blind, at Norwood, an institution the Queen visited many times. The last occasion was in 1915, when the war cloud was dark over the land, and she had cause for deep and personal grief in the danger of those dear to her. Putting her personal sorrow aside, she opened a new building to be given over to the piano-tuning branch of the work, and also distributed prizes. Many of the blind students who came in contact with her then, speak still of her extraordinary charm and of her rare combination of sympathy and tact—two gifts which *do not go together* always.

A clergyman, whose church is close to the Normal College, had a very sweet little story to tell of the Queen Mother when he preached on the Sunday after her death. It is worth repeating, not so much for itself as because it is typical of the thousand others which might be told with truth.

There was in Norwood an old lady who was lying ill, and one day she amused herself by turning over the leaves of a photographic album. Among the portraits she found one of "The Princess of Wales" as a bride, and with some doubt and hesitation ventured to send it to the Queen Mother at Marlborough House, begging she would accept it. A little later a gentleman of the Court arrived to bring the Queen Mother's

personal thanks for the gift; also that gentleman made certain tactful inquiries as to the position of the old lady, with the result that presently she received a warmly-quilted dressing-gown, together with a signed portrait of "The Prince and Princess of Wales."

Was ever the pretty act of a loyal subject more graciously acknowledged by a Queen?

Slight mention has been made already of the burden the days of the Great War laid upon Her Majesty. Her only son, King George, was in deadly danger often—good sailor and gallant gentleman that he is, His Majesty shared the perils of his men to an extent undreamed by the public at large—her dearly-loved grandson, the Prince of Wales, was on active service in France, a thorn in the flesh to many high officials because he forgot he was a Prince in remembering he was a soldier, and had no thought of personal danger. Early in the war her nephew, Prince Maurice, died of wounds, and in every branch of service, on every sea and every front, some near and dear relation was fighting for that homeland which, first hers by adoption, had become hers indeed from close association and the most sacred of ties. The nation's anguish was her own, and very beautiful and touching are the stories told in farm and cottage around Sandringham of how the Queen Mother comforted other mothers when they mourned their sons; how

she helped disabled men, and sharing many vigils of anxiety, was striving to console and comfort and cheer always.

In addition she had to bear appalling anxiety concerning her loved sister, the Empress Marie, and that sister's idolised son. At first the Empress had been in personal danger; later she escaped from Russia, but she left her son behind to meet his death in that dreadful cellar—a death shared by his wife, once that Princess Alix of Hesse who had played with the children in the Sandringham nurseries and, as a motherless child, had crept close to the warm mother-heart of the then Princess of Wales.

Before the war cloud had broken another deep sorrow had befallen Her Majesty in the death, at the hand of an assassin, of her favourite brother, Prince William of Denmark, who had become King George of Greece. He was shot while driving through the streets of his capital.

The war cloud passed, the promise of happier days was ahead, when again the shadow of a very personal grief darkened that loving wife. In her retirement at Sandringham the Queen Mother had devoted very much time to the care and companionship of little Prince John, youngest son of King George and Queen Mary. The Prince had made few public appearances, yet at the time of His Majesty's accession and Coronation he had been seen several times

and on the occasion when his royal parents visited the Crystal Palace in connection with the Pageant of Empire held there, Prince John, then about six years old, was particularly popular. He was so thoroughly a bright and unaffected little boy.

It was known his health was delicate ; he spent most of his time in Norfolk, and was very, very dear to his grandmother, who watched by him in many an illness, to rejoice when she saw him struggle back to convalescence. In January 1919, just after the Armistice, the little Prince died suddenly, and the nation knew how heavy a grief the loss of the little lad must be to the Queen Mother when it read of the inscription, in her own handwriting, that was attached to the wreath she laid upon his coffin.

He was buried in Sandringham churchyard, next to the little Prince John, his namesake, who had been the Queen Mother's child, and in the years which followed, Her Majesty made those graves of the little ones her personal care.

A year later another death occurred in the royal family, that of Princess Margaret of Connaught, elder daughter of the Duke, who had become Crown Princess of Sweden by her marriage. She also had been one of the children who had spent happy days at Sandringham.

Yet it is wrong to dwell too much upon this sorrowful side of the later years, since they held

so much peaceful happiness as well. As regards the Queen Mother's public appearances, those very popular drives through London on Rose Days have been mentioned, while few will forget her radiant smiles at the weddings of her grandchildren, Princess Mary with Viscount Lascelles, and of the Duke of York—both marriages that must have made a strong appeal to her, since they were happy love matches in the best and truest sense of the words.

For the most part she lived quietly at Sandringham however, and in connection with her withdrawal from London, a story, suppressed during her life but which crept into the Press at the time of her death, may be repeated.

Royalties, no less than their subjects, suffer from heavy taxation, of which they bear their full share, and the after-war taxes and super-taxes made so great an inroad into the fortune of the Queen Mother it was calculated that her income was reduced by more than one half, while naturally all expenses had increased. The position was laid before her—bluntly she was told economy must be exercised, would she decide in what direction expenses should be curtailed? There were her charities, for instance.

Very definitely she told her advisers she would have no alteration in that direction. Her donations to various public funds were very large, but greater still was the amount she

distributed in purely personal charity ; it reached a sum of which the world had no idea, so anxious was she to "do good by stealth." Not one penny thus devoted must be diverted into other channels, she said ; all must be given as usual, but since economy was essential she would practically close Marlborough House and reduce her personal expenditure in every possible way.

This programme she carried out, making constant sacrifices quietly, unostentatiously, as all her good work was done.

Of the devotion of her only surviving son, King George, it is impossible to write much. To do so even briefly is to tread on holy ground, but at least it may be said that the frequent visits of His Majesty and his Queen—who was dear as a daughter to the Queen Mother, for her own sake as well as for that of the Princess Mary of the past, who had been loved so well—and of her other children and her grandchildren, filled her life with interest. Always she had the close and tender companionship of the Princess Victoria, she who, in our picture on another page, is shown as a little girl, nestling most closely of all the children to her lovely young mother. That little girl has grown into a very gentle, kindly lady, whose devotion to her mother increased, if it were possible, with the passing of the years. The royal mother and daughter

were seldom apart. It was no common bond of love which held these two together.

Also in close attendance was Her Majesty's ever faithful and devoted friend, the Hon. Charlotte Knollys, whose attendance on her royal mistress lasted without break for fifty-four years; and there was Sir Dighton Probyn, Keeper of the Household, whose loyal devotion never faltered until his death, a few months before that of the royal lady he had served so long and well.

Thus the eventide of that brilliant life passed very quietly. The Queen Mother did not allow her active interest in all around her to grow less, but with respect it may be said she gradually laid aside the burden of royal state, to live as a lady bountiful amid the people who loved her. In Sandringham and around, a thousand stories are told illustrating her kindly heart, her tender care; and of the pictures such stories call up none is sweeter than one which belongs to the sunny days of her last summer, when Her Majesty fell into the habit of stopping her carriage if she saw children playing by the wayside as she was driving through the lanes. Alighting, she would linger for a long time talking to them, leading them to let her share their little joys and sorrows.

Early in November 1925, a rumour spread that the Queen Mother was ill, then followed a

statement that she had been seen out driving, and the nation dismissed its fears; not so those who lived near Sandringham, however. A lady in King's Lynn wrote in a private letter that she had caught a glimpse of Her Majesty in passing, and felt sure she was very ill from the way in which she seemed huddled in a corner of the carriage. That shrinking form was so very different from the still-erect and graceful figure with the bright and smiling face the people knew.

That Her Majesty was slow to adopt new styles and fashions was proved by her clinging to what, in her honour, was called "the Princess gown" and "the Princess bonnet." For the same reason, doubtless, she persisted in carrying a particularly small sunshade, not much larger than a soup plate, during her drives about Sandringham. The lady whose letter is quoted above told the writer, "If anyone had dared to suggest there was anything laughable in that very small sunshade he would have been lynched, I think. The people loved their dear lady so well they respected her few foibles."

A very simple little story that, yet is it not eloquent? No account of stately pageant, of regal splendour, could show the real affection of the people with such vivid, tender truth.

Less than a week after that last drive through King's Lynn (it was on Saturday, November

14th), came news of a definite heart attack, and that King George and Queen Mary had hastened to Sandringham. Even then hope lingered. On the Friday of that week (November 20th), H.R.H. the Prince of Wales was to be entertained at a banquet at the Guildhall, and London's streets were gay with bunting in his honour. Already crowds were gathering to cheer "Prince Charming" as he drove by, when suddenly workmen began to remove the flags. In silence the waiting crowds melted away. All knew what it meant. The banquet was postponed. . . . The Prince was hurrying to Sandringham. . . . The Queen Mother was dying.

Again there came a very typical touch. The real seriousness of the illness was grasped by the waiting world from the fact that an old lady, the Queen Mother's favourite "dresser" for many years, had been summoned in haste to that bedside where the King and Queen were watching. In their own deep grief their Majesties remembered the old servant loved their dear one also.

That evening, as the twilight gathered, the Queen Mother lay unconscious, and very gently, very gradually, as those who loved her, those she loved, watched and prayed beside her, the unconsciousness merged into the perfect rest which knows no waking—here.

So she passed from us, the gracious lady, the beloved Queen, of whom in all reverence may be written, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant."

On the Sunday a London paper, *The Sunday Times*, gave the following message from its special correspondent at Sandringham, a message which brings the sense of heartfelt loss very closely home :

"A pathetic figure in the home of mourning where the dead Queen now lies is the little Pekinese dog to which Her Majesty was deeply attached. Ever since Thursday the little creature has wandered disconsolately about the corridors of the great house, whimpering piteously for its mistress, and refusing all food and comfort. After Her Majesty had passed away, the little dog lay across the threshold of that death-chamber, the picture of animal grief.

". . . The sorrow of the people in the villages round Sandringham is of the nature of intense personal grief. Tears were flowing down the cheeks of a woman to whom I spoke this morning.

" 'Her Majesty was a very great lady,' she said. ' . . . Not once, but many times she has been in my cottage. . . . The dear Queen knew every one in the village.'

“Everywhere I hear the same story. . . . Grief is manifested on every side.”

Before the beautiful face was hidden for ever, a few chosen retainers and friends were allowed to pass through the death-chamber for a last farewell, and of these one made the following statement to the Press :

“There was the Queen, lying on her bed, looking very beautiful and calm. . . . By her side on the white coverlet were a few sprays of pink carnations. The only jewellery we saw were her wedding and engagement rings.”

In later years carnations had taken the place of lilies of the valley as the Queen Mother's favourite flowers, perhaps because of some sad and tender association possessed by the lilies ; and carnations were very evident among the funeral flowers. The wreath sent by the Princess Beatrice, in conjunction with Princess Marie Louise, was said to “contain all the favourite flowers of the Queen Mother—pink roses, pink carnations, violets and lilies, with laurel leaves.”

In the white and gold drawing-room at Sandringham they gathered the wreaths and crosses and sheaf bouquets, triumphs of the florists' art, and simple offerings from cottage gardens. The flowers almost covered the vast expanse of the

floor, and the wintry air was heavy with their perfume. Every wreath had some tender story to tell—there was one of artificial roses made for Rose Day sales by the blind and crippled that Rose Day helps, one from the Salvation Army in gratitude for personal interest, one from a clergyman, inscribed as to “One of the most generous friends the Church has known,” and one from “A little boy of six on whom she once smiled.”

Among the very elaborate floral tributes was that sent by the City of Liverpool. By a happy thought it took the form of a model of the old *Victoria and Albert* yacht which brought the Princess to our shores. A fairy craft indeed this ship of flowers seemed, its sails of chrysanthemums, its hull of pink carnations, its deck of orchids.

A sheaf of eighty carnations has its special story also. The pupils of Dersingham School—on the Sandringham estate—were preparing to present a bouquet of eighty-one carnations to the Queen Mother on her eighty-first birthday, which was little more than a week away. It was eighty of these carefully-tended blooms which followed her to her grave.

There is at Sandringham a quiet path through a secluded shrubbery, a path by which the Queen Mother was wont to make her quiet way to

church each Sunday, and in the early greyness of the November morning a little company of old servants carried her in her coffin along that familiar path, her daughter following with a few close friends. Thus, with loving unostentation, the Queen Mother was borne to the ivy-clad church where she had worshipped, and they laid her coffin in the chancel exactly upon the spot—marked by a brazen cross—where the coffin of her son, the Duke of Clarence, had rested.

There the dead Queen remained from early Monday morning till Thursday, vigil by the bier being kept by her devoted servants—no stranger was allowed to share that sacred watch. The church remained open each day, while county folk and tenant farmers, townspeople and villagers, filed through in tearful procession in their homage to the dead.

“It seems too sad that our very dear lady leaves us for ever to-morrow,” wrote one who lived near, and the words speak for the thousand hearts that were dumb.

.
The morning of Thursday, November 26th, saw Sandringham’s farewell. Borne upon a gun-carriage the coffin was carried very slowly the two-and-three-quarter miles to Wolferton station along lanes white with early snow. On foot, the entire distance, followed King George, with the Prince of Wales and Prince Olaf on

either hand, the Duke of York and Prince Henry close behind. Carriages containing the royal ladies came next, and then the tenants and servants of the house and estate, the surrounding gentry, the people of all grades from town and village near. Three miles long it stretched, that great procession of princes, nobles, yeomen, traders, peasants, who were as one in their mourning for the dead.

From Wolferton the journey was made by train, and the removal to St. James's Palace was strictly private. All night the dead Queen rested there, and at eleven the following morning the coffin was borne in stately procession to Westminster Abbey, where the ceremonial funeral service (if such a term may be allowed) was celebrated.

London, wrapped in a mantle of snow, was a city of mourning; its theatres closed, its people garbed in black. Rich and poor filled the windows along the route or lined the streets regardless of the bitter cold. Amongst those who watched—she had a seat in a window in Parliament Street—was an aged lady, widow of Dr. Barnardo, whose work for orphans is so well known. Mrs. Barnardo had occupied a window sixty-two years before to watch the progress of the “Princess Alexandra,” who had come amongst us as a radiant bride.

Four Kings took part in that funeral procession

from London's ancient palace to the old, old abbey where so many royalties lie; for the Kings of Denmark and Norway and Belgium had hurried to show their affection and respect. Yet, stately as that ceremonial must be, it was said by one who watched that "beautiful simplicity" was the keynote of all. On foot they came, those monarchs, following King George, who walked alone behind the coffin, the Queen and other royal ladies driving to the abbey by another route, so as to await the procession there.

Thus "to the sound of a nation's mourning" the Queen Mother was carried through the streets of the London that had taken her to its great heart as a girl-bride more than half a century before, and within the abbey, where the crown that made her Britain's consort had been placed on her Queenly head, the Archbishop waited to conduct the solemn service.

Of that scene within the abbey many descriptions appeared in the Press, but none were more eloquently beautiful than that by Sir John Foster Fraser in the *Evening Standard*, from which the following is a quotation:

"Very gently on the shoulders of eight men of the Grenadier Guards the frail body of the sweet, dead Queen was carried through the abbey.

"Soft music and the voices of choristers

dimly sounded as the procession moved to the chancel and the casket was placed there before the steps of the altar. Her only son, the King, stood at the head of the bier, his head bowed and very humble.

"Near by were other great ones—Kings and Princes of other lands, statesmen of our own country, high officials, all resplendent in military uniform and garb.

". . . It was all so majestic, so solemn, so beautiful.

"But the eye rested most on the slim coffin. There reposed Queen Alexandra. The last time I saw her, very near that place where now she lay so still, she was smiling and happy at the marriage of her granddaughter, Princess Mary.

"Then the organ was shrill with the gay notes of Mendelssohn's 'Wedding March.' Now it was sobbing Brahms's choral prelude, 'Oh, world, I needs must leave thee.'

"The King, standing a little way from other men, but very near his mother, never moved, never lifted his head, never turned it; he just stood amid that mighty congregation, a nation in mourning, bidding the longest of farewells, as though he were all alone and very lonely—as indeed he was."

The service over, the abbey was thrown open,

and mourning crowds, calculated to number more than one hundred thousand, filed past the catafalque all through that November day till midnight. Originally the hour fixed for the closing of the abbey had been ten, but, ever mindful of his people, even in his grief, King George had ordered, very characteristically, that all who wished to pay their last tribute to the Queen Mother should be admitted. The command was obeyed to the letter.

When midnight came, the streets about the abbey seemed deserted, the great company had dispersed, the doors were closed, the police went away. Gentlemen-at-Arms and Yeomen of the Guard took the place of the sentries who had been keeping guard around the catafalque, and within the abbey all was very still when there came a knocking at the doors.

On those doors being opened a fresh crowd was found to have gathered; there were waiters, waitresses, kitchen-workers in restaurants, taxi-drivers, cabmen, workers who had been unable to present themselves before.

For a little while there was doubt what should be done; clergy of the abbey had departed, as well as the police, and the Captain of the Gentlemen-at-Arms had no authority to act. The vergers who remained, alone of all the abbey officials, could do nothing; but word was sent to some of the clergy, and very soon one of these

gentlemen arrived with the order that the King's command must be obeyed, that none must be turned away. Thus in the dead of night, with only that one clergyman and the solitary verger to direct and guide the queue, another throng of loyal and mourning people filed past the catafalque on which the dead Queen lay. They went, but yet another crowd gathered, and they were admitted also.

It was what the Queen Mother, so loved, so loving, would have wished.

In the very early morning the coffin was taken by road to Windsor and carried to the Albert Memorial Chapel,¹ where a little later the royal mourners attended a strictly private service.

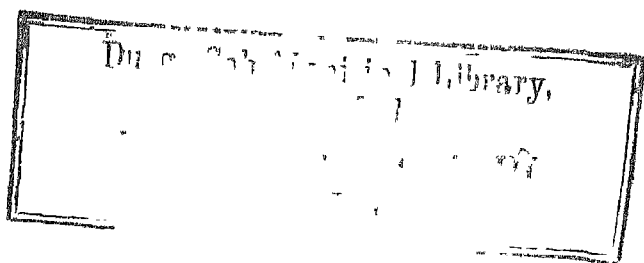
There before the altar they left her coffin for a time. The work of completing the stately tomb, of which she approved the design as a memorial for King Edward, is not finished. Now the work is being pushed ahead, and when all is done she will lie by the side of her husband, near to the son she loved.

Thus in her eighty-first year the great Queen

¹The chapel, now called "The Albert Memorial," is an ancient building, designed by Henry VII, who intended it for his own burial. Later its decorations were carried out by Cardinal Wolsey, and when Henry VIII. died he was laid between its walls. The Commonwealth saw its partial destruction, and it remained derelict until Queen Victoria restored it as a memorial chapel to the Prince Consort, whose cenotaph in white and black Tuscan marble she placed there. Later, she added a monument to her son, the Duke of Albany, and on the death of the Duke of Clarence he was laid in an altar tomb within the walls. Now a greater sarcophagus will rise in its midst, where Edward and Alexandra will lie side by side.

Mother went from us, still young in heart, still very sweet and fair, and the nation which had taken her to itself in the days of her radiant girlhood, who had loved her in her regal pride as in her sweet home life, who had known her goodness and her charm, mourned beside her coffin while still her memory lived enshrined in every heart.

THE END



INDEX

- Abergeldie Castle, 98
 Albert, Prince of Saxe-Coburg (Prince Consort), 38, 45, 48, 49
 Albert Edward, Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.) *See* QUEEN ALEXANDRA
 Albert Victor, Prince, Duke of Clarence, 109, 110, 111, 140, 157, 183
 Alexander III., Tsar of Russia, 140, 191
 Alexandra, Queen : Birth of, 19 ; early friendship, 28 ; first meeting with the Prince of Wales, 46 ; love-story, 48 ; engagement ring, 55, 287 ; at Villiers Abbey, 55 ; official visit to England, 58 ; received into Church of England, 62 ; wedding presents, 63, 75 ; leaving home, 64 ; wedding, 72 ; honeymoon, 78 ; her favourite homes, 80, 85 ; first state appearance as Princess of Wales, 99 ; first child born, 109 ; twentieth birthday, 116 ; second son born, 116 ; serious illness, 121 ; first daughter born, 121 ; visit to Ireland, 122 ; second daughter born, 122 ; visit to Egypt, 123 ; third daughter born, 130 ; Prince Alexander John born and died, 131 ; illness of the Prince of Wales, 133 ; kindness to organist, 163 ; Her Majesty's pets, 166 ; as Lady Bountiful, 166 ; first grandchild, 179 ; visit to Greece, 180 ; first grandson, 190 ; accident to Prince of Wales, 196 ; attempted assassination of the Prince, 198 ; death of Queen Louise of Denmark, 197 ; Queen Consort, 201 ; opening of Parliament, 202, 221 ; Coronation preparations, 206 ; King Edward's illness, 210 ; crowned, 211 ; peril from fire, 214 ; list of grandchildren, 216 ; death of the King of Denmark, 218 ; royal good works, 221 ; widowed, 222 ; the Queen Mother, 225 ; anxieties during Great War, 225 ; closing scenes, 234
 Alice, Princess of Great Britain, Grand Duchess of Hesse, 60, 157
 Alix of Hesse, Tsarina, 160, 192
 Arthur of Connaught, Princess, 205
 Alphonso of Spain, 217
 Augusta of Cambridge, Princess, 27
Bacchante (Warship), 151, 154, 155
 Balls at Sandringham, 168
 Balmoral Castle, 97, 133
 Beaconsfield, Earl of, 163, 164
 Bernstorff, Palace of, 23, 64, 88, 105
 Bridesmaids, 75
 Bricklayers' Arms Station, 69
Britannia Training Ship, 150
 British Home for Incurables, 226
 Buckingham Palace, 49, 79, 92, 95, 222
 Burdett-Coutts, Baroness, 146
 Caesar (King Edward's dog), 223
 Caithness, Earl of, 69
 Cairo, 123
 Cambridge, Duchess of, 27
 Cambridge, Duke of, 69
 Cambridge, Princess Mary Adelaide of (Duchess of Teck), 28, 44, 47, 60, 76, 116, 117, 118, 158, 181, 195
 Cambridge Cottage, 43

- Caroline Matilda, Princess of Great Britain, 18
 Charles of Denmark (now King Haakon of Norway), 141, 193, 217
 Charlotte, Princess of Great Britain, 35, 61, 82
 Charlotte, Queen, 93
 Chester, Earl and Countess of, 137
 Crystal Palace, 49, 122
 Cumberland, Duke of, how he became King of Hanover, 155
 Christian of Glucksburgh, King Christian of Denmark, 16, 18, 120, 218
 Claremont Palace, 36
 Copenhagen, 15, 25, 64, 195
 Coronation, 206, 211
 Crimea, 129

 Dagmar, Princess of Denmark (Empress Marie of Russia), 20, 53, 120, 139, 191, 219
 De Foe, Daniel, 81
 De Lesseps, 128
 Denmark and Prussia, war between, 112
 Devil's Tower, Windsor Castle, 59
 Doves of Peace, 122
 "Drawing-rooms," 80, 94, 100
 Duchess of Kent, 35, 37

 Edinburgh, Duke of (Duke of Saxe-Coburg Gotha), 122, 141, 199
 Edward VII. *See* QUEEN ALEXANDRA
 Electric light at Karnak, 127
 Elizabeth, Empress of Austria, 123
 Ena of Battenburg, Princess (Queen of Spain), 218
 Empire of India, 148
 Eugenie, Empress of the French, 123

 Fife, Duke and Duchess of, 115, 140, 173, 179, 205
 Flowers, the Queen's favourite, 87, 237

 Frogmore, 108

 George, His Majesty King, 116, 140, 157, 158, 180, 186, 188, 202, 232, 239
 George, Prince of Cambridge, 27
 George, King of Greece. *See* PRINCE WILLIAM OF DENMARK
 Gipsy's prophecy, 208
 Gladstone, 163, 196
 Grandchildren of Queen Alexandra, 216
 Gravesend, 67
 Guildhall, 104

 Haakon of Norway. *See* PRINCE CHARLES OF DENMARK
 Helena (Princess Christian), 59, 119
 Heligoland, Battle of, 113
 Holly Lodge, 146
 Holy Land, Prince's tour, 52

 India, Prince of Wales's visits, 144
 Indian Empire, 148
 Intruders at Buckingham Palace, 95

 John, Prince, 216, 229
 Jones, 95
 Jubilee, 195

 Karnak, 127
 Kent, Duchess of, 35, 37
 Kew Palace, 29
 Kissing at "Drawing-rooms," 102
 Knollys, Charlotte, The Hon., 215, 233
 Koh-i-noor, the legend of, 203

 Leopold, King of the Belgians, 35, 54, 64
 Lind, Jenny, 76
 Louise, Duchess of Fife, 140, 173

 Macclesfield, Lady, 110
 Marlborough, the Great Duke of, 80
 Marlborough House, 48, 80, 108, 122, 180, 225

- Margaret of Connaught, Princess
(Crown Princess of Sweden), 230
Margate, 67
Mary (May), Princess of Teck
(Her Majesty Queen Mary), 158,
181, 186, 188
Mary, Princess, Viscountess
Lascelles, 231
Missionary hymn: why it was
sung, 162
- Nevill, Lady Dorothy, 213
Newstead Abbey, 86
Normal College, 227
- Olaf, Prince, 219, 239
Osborne, 58, 78, 98, 136
- Paget, Walpurga, Lady, 35
Parliament, 202, 221
People's Dowry, 68
Pretoria, peace signed, 206
Princess Royal, 144, 204, 205
Probyn, Sir Dighton, 233
- Rose Day instituted, 227
Royal Marriage Act, 83
Rumpenhelm, 26, 45, 47, 138
- St. George's Chapel, Windsor, 36,
61, 72, 244
St. George's Hall, Windsor, 77
St. James's Palace, 83, 94, 178,
240
St. Paul's Cathedral, 137
Sandringham, 87, 133, 144, 154,
157, 168, 180, 189, 200, 225, 235
Sandringham, the balls, 168
Sandringham Church, 131, 162,
239
- Schleswig and Holstein, 16, 118
Serdenborg Palace, 138
Sheen Lodge, 188
Sipido, would-be assassin, 198
Stanley, Dean of Westminster,
145, 163
- Thanksgiving service, 137
Thyra, Princess of Denmark, 20,
54, 66, 187, 155
Tour round the world of Duke and
Duchess of Cornwall, 202
- Victor Emmanuel, King of Italy,
219
Victoria, Her Majesty Queen, 23,
38, 45, 50, 55, 56, 71, 79, 87,
92, 93, 133, 135, 136, 137, 142,
145, 148, 160, 176, 184, 191,
195, 200
Victoria and Albert, royal yacht,
60, 238
Virginia Water, 109
Volunteers, 70
- Wales, the present Prince of,
83, 190, 235, 239
Warrior, the first ironclad, 67
Wilde, Lady, 25
William, Prince of Denmark
(King George of Greece), 53,
105, 120, 139, 217, 229
"Williams," Mr. and Mrs., 129
Windsor, 59, 71, 77, 108, 183, 214,
244
- Yellow Palace, 15, 16, 18, 52, 88,
188
York Cottage, 194
York, present Duke of, 231

